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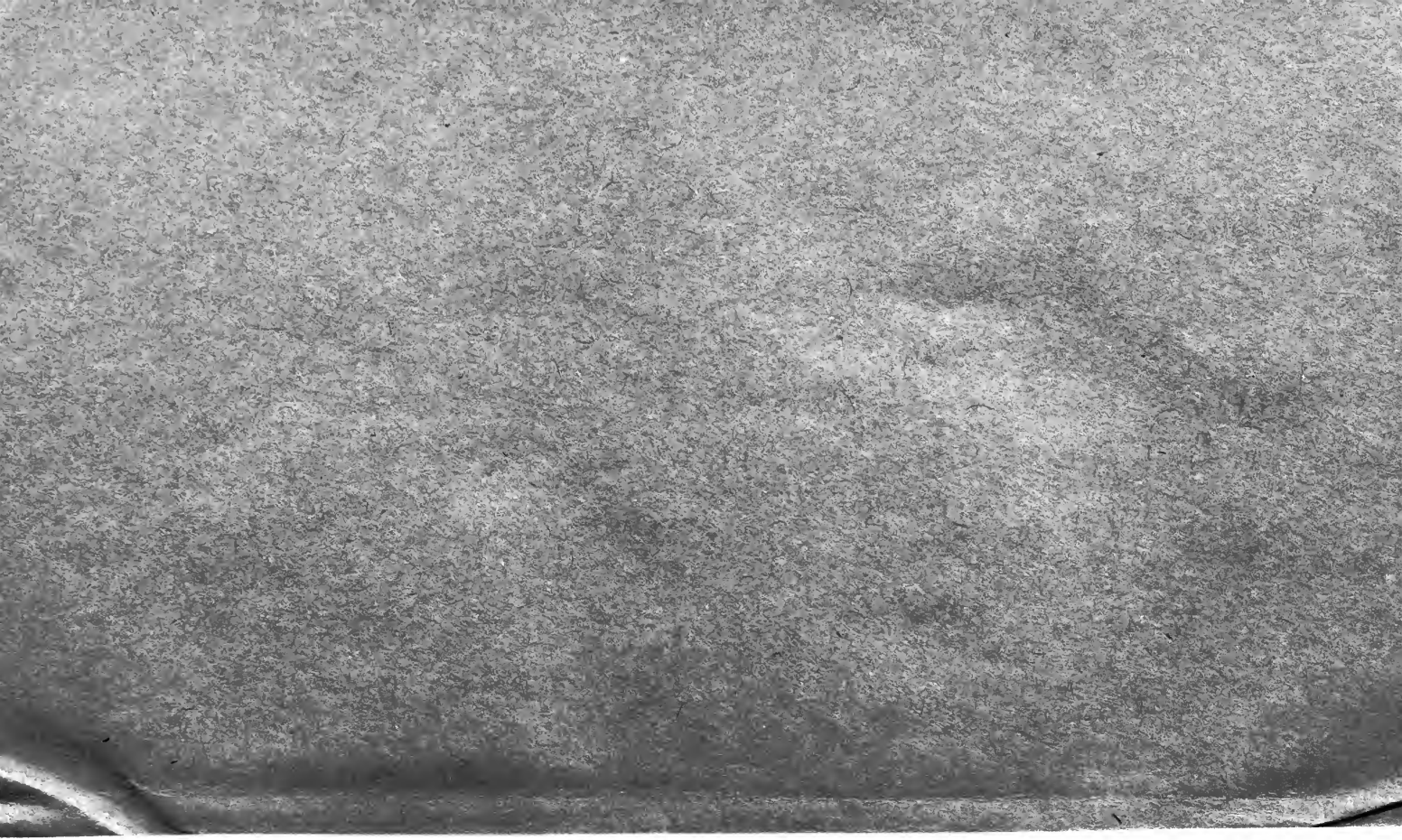

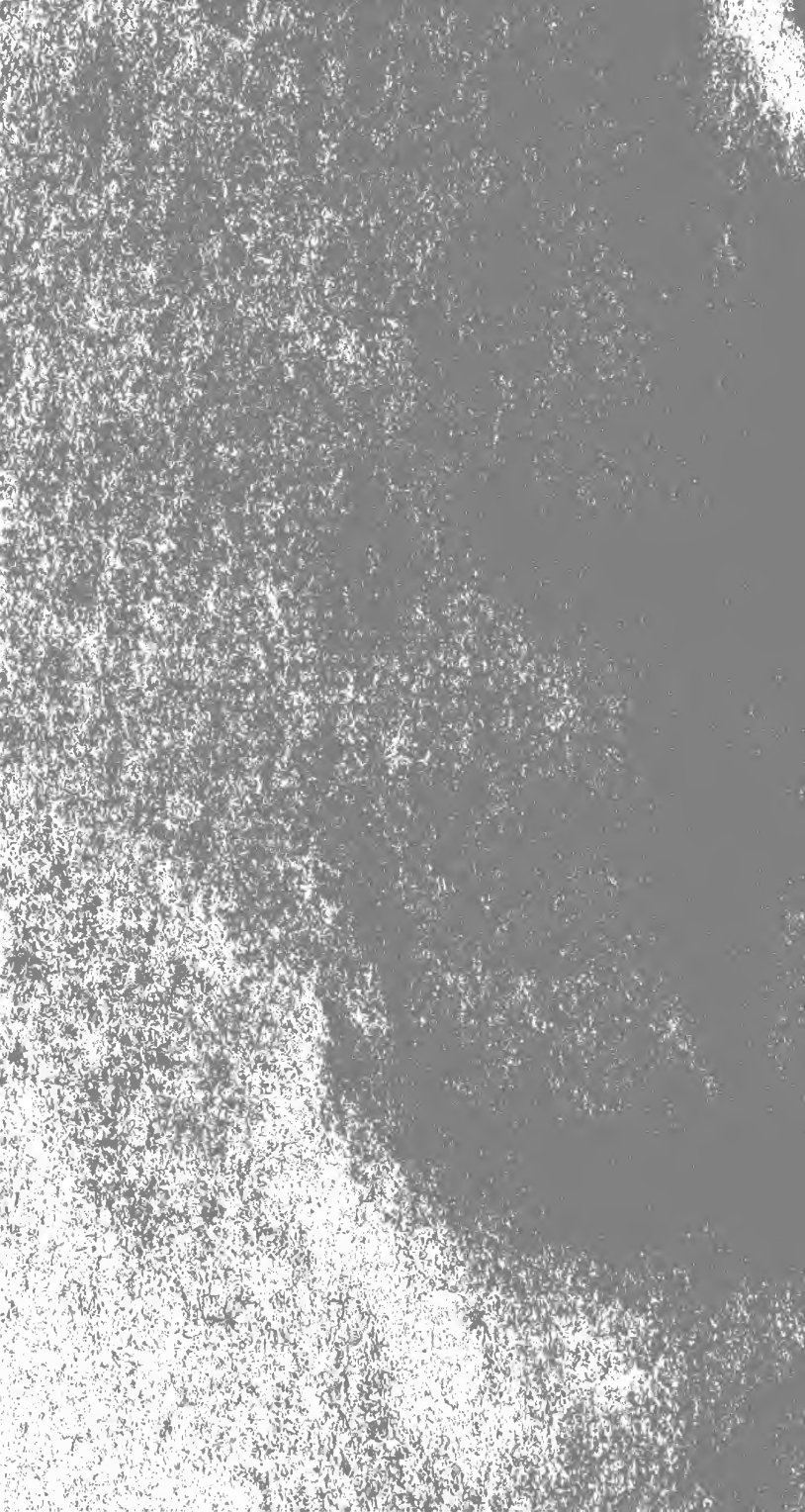

THE

CHURCH SETTLEMENT

OF

IRELAND,

OR,

HIBERNIA PACANDA.

BY

AUBREY DE VERE.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, READER, AND DYER.
DUBLIN: DUFFY.
1866.

I.

With a Preface by the same Author.

THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT IN IRELAND. Illustrated exclusively by Protestant Authorities. Dublin: WARREN.

By the same Author.

II.

In a few days.

IRELAND'S CHURCH PROPERTY, AND THE RIGHT USE OF IT. London: LONGMANS. Dublin: DUFFY.

III.

THE SISTERS; AND INISFAIL, a Lyrical Chronicle of Ireland. London: LONGMANS.

IV.

THE INFANT BRIDAL, AND OTHER POEMS. London: MACMILLAN.

THE

CHURCH SETTLEMENT OF IRELAND.

"That Jacobinism which is speculative in its origin, and which arises from wantonness and fulness of blood, may possibly be kept under by firmness and prudence. The very levity of character which produces it may extinguish it. But Jacobinism which arises from penury and irritation, from *scorned loyalty and rejected allegiance*, has much deeper roots. They take their nourishment from the bottom of human nature, and the unalterable constitution of things, and not from humour and caprice, or the opinions of the day about privileges and liberties. These roots will be shot into the depths of hell, and will at last raise up their proud tops to Heaven itself."—*Burke. Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 380.

"To one or other of these principles—that of the appropriation of the whole of the Ecclesiastical revenues to the majority, or that of their partition according to numbers—there exists in the civilized world but one exception, Ireland; and * * Ireland is the only country in the world in which a condition of social and political disorganisation prevails, growing out of, or closely connected with, religious animosities, and full of danger to the most vital interests of the State.—*Past and present Policy of England towards Ireland*, p. 271.

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NOTICE.

THE first two letters included in this pamphlet were published in the *Times* last spring, with the hope of directing the attention of thoughtful persons in England to the duty and necessity of establishing Religious Equality in Ireland. Nearly at the same time I published several letters in two of the Irish newspapers, the object of which was to shew that it is through a just distribution of her Church Property, not through its secularization, that Ireland ought to win Religious Equality. These letters will shortly be re-published under the title "Ireland's Church Property, and the right use of it." I hope also, before long, to publish some remarks upon the arguments commonly urged in defence of the existing Church Settlement: but upon the present occasion I have confined myself, as much as possible, to one great aspect of that question, viz., its relation to the constitutional rights of the Irish people.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the following pages have been in type, Fenianism has once more raised its head. This is an unwelcome confirmation of the remark made in page 11, that a plague

which comes from a foreign land can only be stayed by that policy, masterly at once and merciful, which deprives it of that aliment supplied to it in Ireland by the national discontent. The times are urgent, though attempts as witless as they are wicked may be long warded off; and to delay the permanent remedy is to play into the hands of those who, at a secure distance, indulge their sport, or their greed, by inflaming popular passions, and prolonging a nation's poverty and unrest. Every new incident enforces the same moral. Alarm prevails again :—Why, it has been asked, is not the challenge met by the loyal in Ireland as a similar challenge would be met by the same class in England? *Because they do not feel the ground solid beneath their feet.* They trust to the strong hand of the State. The just hand alone is consistently strong.

The real danger is not that immediate one which scares the timid, and passes in a few days. It is that which proceeds from the chronic disease of industry paralyzed by insecurity, and a people demoralized by equivocal social relations.

A. De V.

December 2, 1866.

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PREFACE.

For the pacification of Ireland, religious equality is necessary; and that equality should be effected, not by the secularization of the existing Church property, but by a just distribution of it between the Catholics and the Protestants. This is the thesis maintained in the following pages.

Such a change, it is said by some, would be an injustice and injury to Protestant interests. An erroneous tradition has long maintained itself on this subject. Let us ascertain the religious statistics of Ireland, and compare them with those of England and other countries.

First, as to population. According to the last census, the number of those belonging to the Established Church is 693,357; and that of the Roman Catholics is 4,505,265. Of the total Irish population the Established Church possesses about one-ninth part. But this statement is far from showing the whole state of the facts. Two Dioceses in Ulster (consisting each of united dioceses), presided over respectively by the Archbishop of Armagh and the Bishop of Down, together with the diocese of Dublin, contain, by themselves, 417,011 of the population belonging to the Establishment, leaving in all Ireland, with the exception of these three dioceses, only 276,346, a population less than that of many an English town. Excluding Ulster, the members of the Establishment in Ireland about equal in number the inhabitants of Birmingham, and are fewer than those of Liverpool. Even in Ulster the Roman Catholic popu-

lation exceeds, though not largely, the Presbyterian and that of the Establishment taken together. In all Munster the Establishment counts but 80,860, being less by 5,919 than the number of Catholics in the borough of Cork alone. In all Connaught it counts about 40,000—a body about as numerous as the Catholic population of the city of Limerick or that of Belfast. It used to be thought during the famine years that, as the visitation fell with most force upon the poorest part of the population, it would be found to have effected a great change in the proportion between Catholics and Protestants. But the census proved the change to amount to but a small fraction. In 1834 the Catholic population was 80·9 per cent. of the whole; in 1861 it was 77·7 per cent.

What now are the statistics as regards Endowment? That of the Catholic Church will give us no trouble; that of the Establishment has already given a great deal, and we have not yet got a plain account of the matter. During the debate upon Earl Grey's motion last session, it was stated to amount only to £420,000 per annum, and by some speakers it has been reckoned at a sum lower still. But according to the "Stackpoole Returns" furnished from official sources, it amounts to £586,428. Even this statement does not include important parts of that Revenue. A clergyman of the Irish Establishment, remarkable for accurate information and for fearless impartiality, Dr. Maziere Brady, has commented upon it thus in a published letter:—"The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, when they estimated the aggregate amount of the revenue of the Established Church (whether derived from land, rentcharge, or any other source) at the sum of £586,428, omitted the sums which they themselves receive out of the See Estates for church purposes. In calculating the gross revenue they also wholly omitted the value of the See houses, and Glebe houses; and in valuing the Glebe lands, they adopted a rate of valuation lower in many instances than even the Poor Law Valuation, which is well known to be much under

the true letting value. Sums derived from pew-rents are likewise omitted. . . . The true amount of Irish Church revenues cannot be ascertained without a Government enquiry, so unwilling are the officials to give information." Dr. Brady remarks pointedly upon the fallacy included in certain distinctions between gross income and net income, which have been much insisted on by some, but with little discrimination as to what properly belongs to the two categories. In estimating the net revenue of the Establishment it is but fair to deduct such a charge as that of poor rates, which, of course, is so much lost to it as a whole:—it is, however, wholly illusory thus to deduct also sums only taken from one portion of the clergy to be paid to another. Dr. Brady observes, in another letter, "The Ecclesiastical Commissioners allege the *net* value of livings (including Bishoprics under that term) to be £448,943. That '*net* value' is exclusive of all stipends paid to the unbeneficed clergymen or curates, and, in many instances, as in the case of sick, absent, and rich incumbents, represents the net sum paid to clergymen for doing no clerical duty whatever."* . . . "If those sums were added . . . the total would perhaps exceed £700,000." Dr. Alfred Lee, also a clergyman of the Irish Established Church, has published several letters touching, among other things, on its revenue. He fell into several errors, some of which he has corrected; and his latest estimate of that revenue (gross) is, I believe, £649,500.

* The Irish Establishment includes 199 parishes which do not contain a single member of it! How do its defenders meet this fact? By the statement, that these 199 *parishes*—they should say 145 of them—are included in *benefices* which do contain members of the Establishment. This would be an answer if the objector contested the skill with which the mosaic of the Establishment is put together; but his complaint refers to another subject, viz., *the souls of men*. How many Catholics are there in these 199 parishes?—98,017. How many Protestants are there in the whole Province of Connaught? Far less than half that number! I should be sorry to see even that small flock deprived of all funds for religious objects:—but Catholics have souls, too.

The following is the most detailed statement I have been able to procure. It agrees with that set forth by Dr. Maziere Brady in his published writings:—

Gross Revenues of the Established Church, taken from the Accounts of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the year ending August 1, 1864, *and from Capt. Stackpoole's returns:—*

* From See Estates in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners ...	£58,126	13	6
* Suspended Dignities, Benefices, and Dis-appropriated Tithes, &c.	19,162	10	11
* Interest on Government Securities ...	2,918	7	4
* ,, Perpetuity Purchase Fund ...	2,955	10	7
* ,, Trustee Chapel Fund ...	18	10	4
* ,, Endowment Fund ...	102	1	4
* ,, Perpetuity Mortgages ...	609	0	6
* ,, Investment for Insurance ...	397	1	0
* Donamon Church Repair Fund ...	7	3	4
* Boulter and Robinson Funds ...	5,286	11	3
Gross Value of Bishoprics	80,059	10	11
,, ,, Livings	503,159	3	2
Trustee Chapels, 1st Appendix ...	1,776	2	8
	£674,578	6	10

The items thus (*) marked seem to represent *net* income, and to the entire sum there remains to be added the value of existing See and Glebe Houses, as follows:—

12 See Houses, at £200 each	£2,400
978 Glebe Houses, at £40 each	39,120
	£41,520

But the sale of perpetuities up to 1861 had produced £631,353, and about as much more remains to be sold, the value of the whole being calculated at £1,200,000, which at 3½ per cent. would give an annual sum of £42,000. The total value of Irish Church property, accordingly, amounts to £716,098 6*s.* 10*d.*, exclusively of Perpetuities; or to £758,098 6*s.* 10*d.* annually, inclusively of perpetuities.

The Church property is liable to deductions on account of Poor Rate, Visitation Fees, Diocesan Schoolmaster's Fee, Insurance on House, and County Cess on farm. Dr. Maziere Brady, however, states his belief that, taking all these matters into consideration, the Irish Establishment's NET income (exclu-

sively of pew rents and other voluntary payments) cannot be short of £700,000; adding, "It is impossible to arrive at the precise sum without a Government enquiry." I do not venture to decide between the statements of these different Church authorities; nor can their variation saffect my argument, which does not assume the correctness of the highest estimate, though the latter is founded upon facts and inferences that have as yet met with no answer.

Nor is this all. No allusion need here be made to the vast property, whether consisting of Lay-tithes or of alienated Church Lands, which once belonged to the Catholic Church of Ireland, and almost all of which is now in the hands of those whose spiritual needs are provided for by the Establishment. But a glance may be cast at a more recent transaction. There is a third property—an outer circle—which floats like a nebular ring round the Irish Establishment. I allude to the Episcopal Lands, much of which have already been alienated from all ecclesiastical or other public use, while the rest is doomed to the same fate. Those lands had in days gone by been let for rents utterly disproportionate to their value, the tenants being, in many cases, the relatives or friends of Bishops long since deceased. Here was a great opportunity; but it was lost. No one thought in 1832 of endowing the Catholic Church; and whatever diminished the wealth of the Establishment was supposed but to diminish an abuse. A law was passed for converting the leases of Church lands into perpetuities; and how the arrangements prescribed by it differed from those made in the case of English Episcopal lands is explained by Mr. Justice Shee, in his valuable work on the Irish Church, published in 1853.* He remarks (p. 53):—"By the sale of perpetuities to the amount of £500,000 [£631,353, in 1861], Church property to an immense amount has already been as good as given to the Irish Protestant clergy

* A later edition appeared in 1863.

and gentry:" and again, "In his (Lord Morpeth's) estimate, the annual income from 669,247 acres of land, which, on very liberal arrangements with the middle-men who stand between the Bishops and their actual tenants, *would more than suffice to maintain upon its present scale the whole Establishment*, was set down at the sum of £130,000 per annum" (p. 20).* Another law made over to the landlords one quarter of the tithe!

All this is lost to the Protestant Church—though not to "The Protestant Interest." The Establishment retains, however, beside her revenue, the property vested in a permanent form for her behoof—property which gives to her members gratis what a Catholic peasantry, the poorest in the world, has to pay for. It benefits permanently by the sums which, since 1833, the Church Commissioners have spent on the building, repairing, or furnishing of Churches and Glebe Houses, and similar purposes. These sums amounted in 1862 (inclusive) to £3,444,328. In the sixty years preceding 1833, those purposes were chiefly provided for by means of Gifts from the Board of First Fruits, Parliamentary grants, Church Rates, and Parish Cess, the private donations having been less than £170,000. Within those years £1,070,435 were spent upon Churches, and £809,699 on Glebe Houses† (*Ibid.* 208). The property thus realized in a permanent form since 1773 amounts to £5,324,462, and cannot be valued at much less than an annual revenue of £200,000. Is not this to go somewhat minutely into the matter? it may be asked. Let us see. From an excellent pamphlet lately published by M. O'Reilly, Esq., M.P., it appears that since 1800 the sums spent by the Irish Catholics on Churches, Convents, Colleges or Seminaries, Hospitals or Orphanages, amount, as nearly as can be ascertained, to £5,274,368. This sum about balances the £5,324,462 "annexed" to the Church of the Ascendency.

Let us now confine our attention to the annual revenue of the Irish Establishment, and let us take that at an estimate very

* *The Irish Church—its History and Statistics.* † *Ibid.*

far below its actual amount. Let us assume it to be no more than £586,428, as stated by the Stackpoole Returns. The population of the Irish Establishment being 693,357, the cost of the religious ministrations is at the rate of about 17*s.* 6*d.* per head of those ministered to. According to Dr. Brady's statistics, it would be at that of more than £1 1*s.*; and at Dr. Lee's, at somewhat less than £1 per head. Compare this with the cost of other establishments. The revenues of the English Parochial Clergy amount, I am told, to somewhat more than £4,000,000 per annum. The population of England and Wales is about 21,000,000, of whom the Establishment would probably not claim more than 16,000,000. To the revenue of the Parochial Clergy other items, of course, have to be added; but the total revenues, from such information, at least, as I have been able to procure, would seem to be between £4,000,000 and £4,500,000. According to that calculation the revenue of the English Church would amount to little more than 5*s.* per head of those ministered to; it would be less still, if, as some affirm, the revenue of that Church is lower, or the number of her members is larger than I have reckoned them. Dr. O'Brien, Bishop of Ossory, has indeed stated, in a recent speech, that in England the number of Churchmen is much smaller—nay, that they exceed Dissenters by only six or seven hundred thousand souls, or at most that the difference claimed by the Church may be that of a million. This is the allegation, I believe, of the Dissenters themselves, who support it by an appeal to the Census of 1851. But it was (as is said) their objections which prevented a similar religious analysis from being included in the latest Census; while it is also to be remembered, that many Dissenters attend the services of the Church of England, and, in secular matters, by no means reject the abundant charities of her Clergy—to whose teaching also they are probably much more indebted than they know. Assuming, however, their claim as regards numbers, the revenue of the English Church

will not rise above about 7*s.* per head. I have seen no recent statistics of the Scotch Kirk;—it has, of course, been affected by the Free Kirk Secession; but before that event, a remarkable book, "The Past and Present Policy of England in Ireland," commented thus on the subject:—"The Scotch Presbyterians are more than twice as numerous as the Irish Episcopalians; while the Ecclesiastical Revenues of the latter are nearly three times as great as those of the former." The numbers of the Scotch Presbyterians, at that time, it counts at 1,800,000, and the Revenue of the Kirk £200,000 per annum, or little more than 2*s.* per head. In most parts of the Continent the Roman Catholic Church is utterly impoverished; and in France, where the Clergy are paid by the State, the charge per head is far lower than in Scotland. In Italy the Roman Catholic Church is supposed to be richer than in any other part of Europe:—the whole property of the Clergy there, secular and regular, is reckoned at £3,000,000 per annum; the laity to whom they minister are 24,000,000; the cost per head is therefore 2*s.* 6*d.*

What inference is to be drawn from this? The Irish Establishment is too poor, men say, to bear a diminution of its property. An establishment is rich or poor according to the proportion which its revenue bears to the number of the souls it ministers to. Where the laity are, like the Irish Protestants, scattered over a wide tract of country, they need, it is true, more clergy, and perhaps, therefore, a more costly establishment than would otherwise be necessary. This is an admission, however, not a denial, that the Establishment is a costly one, while it vindicates that costliness. If the Protestants of Ireland were scattered over India, their Establishment would cost ten times what the Irish Establishment costs. Some would justify that costliness, and some would think it unjustifiable; but no one would deny it. Those who thought that the settlers should be as amply endowed with ecclesiastical ministrations as though

they had fixed their abodes within thirty miles of Calcutta, may be quite right; but probably they would think also that some attempt should be made to accommodate the rights of the few with those of the people at large. So in Ireland. No one complains, either that the Clergy of the minority have endowments, or that those endowments are large. The complaint is that those endowments consist of an ancient and sacred heritage torn from the nation. It is one thing to admit that a small minority is entitled to religious endowments, and quite another thing to concede that, because it is a scattered minority, it is also entitled to consume the whole religious endowments of the nation. Granting that the Protestant Establishment of Ireland should be a rich one, it does not therefore require to be three or four times as wealthy as its English sister, compared with the number of those ministered to, and seven or eight times richer than the wealthiest Roman Catholic Church in Europe.

A just distribution of the Irish Church property, so far from being a fatal blow to the Irish Establishment, would but assimilate its financial condition more nearly to that of the English, when compared with the work done by each. To the Irish Catholics the endowment of their Church out of the ancient Church property of Ireland, would be yet more a political and social than a financial advantage. To Ireland, however, and to the empire, that advantage would be lost—and this it is important to remember—unless the endowment came, and was known to come, from a genuine sense of justice and spirit of good will. By some it has been recommended chiefly on the ground that the resources of the Roman Catholic Clergy have been so crippled by the famine and the exodus, and their influence so much impaired by their steady opposition to Fenianism, that they must now be ready to snatch at aid offered in any form. This is an illusion. Unless it were offered in the most secure and honorable form, there never was a time when they were less tempted to accept it. In Ireland, and I trust in England also,

both among Catholics and Protestants, nothwithstanding occasional eddies and counter-tides, the great main stream of religious sentiment has been on the whole advancing. To the allegation that since the famine the Priests' dues have lamentably fallen off, the best answer is, that in 1854 the number of the clergy was 2,291, and in 1864 had increased to 3,097—a number far short of that needed. In the English Establishment the proportionate number of the parochial clergy to the laity is supposed to be not less than 1 to 800. In the Irish Establishment, the clergy of which number 2,172,* it must be about as 1 to 319. In the Catholic Church of Ireland each of the parochial clergy must have five or six times as many under his charge. The Presbyterian religion does not lean much on clerical ministrations; yet Dr. Chalmers asserted that an average of 500 was as many as could be effectually ministered to by one clergyman. An eminent Irish architect informs me that since 1852, a sum of £375,000, spent upon Catholic religious buildings, had passed through his hands alone, and that, according to his calculations, the whole of what has been spent on such objects within the last thirteen years must amount to £2,500,000. Most of this money has been raised through the exertions of the clergy:—it does not, therefore, seem likely that they have lost their influence, or been left to starve.

Those who insist upon the "Exodus" forget that a large number of the emigrants were rather a charge to their clergy than payers of "dues." Meantime, other classes of Roman Catholics have been growing richer, and very many of them have purchased land sold under the Incumbered Estates Court. If it should be asked why, when such funds have been forthcoming, the religious destitution in large parts of Ireland appears as great as ever, the answer is, that the districts in which the poor are poorest are also those in which there are fewest of that richer

* Allowance, however, must be made for such of the Protestant clergy as are employed upon education, not parochial work.

middle class who have shewn so much religious liberality. The munificent and devout have commonly their favorite objects. A well-known silversmith in Dublin contributed out of his earnings, and anonymously, £500 per annum to the Missionary College of "All-Hallows," which was near him. It by no means follows that he would have given the same sum to some desert in Donegal.

Not in recent only, but in past years, the Roman Catholic clergy and people of Ireland have laboured, as it became them to labour, in the field of religion and Christian civilization; nor have they missed their reward. Since the beginning of this century nearly all the existing Roman Catholic churches, cathedrals, colleges, and ecclesiastical seminaries have been built. The Christian Brothers, who had but one school before the year 1800, have now 195, containing 30,000 scholars; and there now exist also 131 primary schools for boys, which educate 17,155 pupils. Since 1800 more than 146 convents of women have grown up, nearly every one of which has its school; while there are also 51 "superior schools" for girls, with 2,430 pupils. On the Catholic University, in spite of every discouragement, £130,000 has been spent; and a noble missionary college has been created which educates 220 students, and has already sent more than 400 priests into remote lands. Here are no signs of decay. It is those who thus "help themselves" that have best earned, and are most likely to profit by the aid of the nation:—it is they also, as a wise statesman will remember, who will be least disposed to acquiesce in injustice. They do not boast of what they have done; nor do they grudge the praise that is justly due to others; but when they demand equal constitutional rights, it would be a dangerous mistake to suppose that they sue for alms *in forma pauperis*.

"In what condition," it may be asked, "is the Established Church in Ireland?" In an unusually efficient one, except so far as its exclusive Ascendency injures it. Its clergy are far

more zealous, laborious, and instructed than they were in past times; its organization is better; and it is amply furnished with churches and schools. Non-residence is now a rare reproach. It has men of learning, who have illustrated their country's annals; and several cathedrals have been either built or restored lately—which can only be attributed to a growing interest in the venerable and ecclesiastical. It is not to the past that the Irish "churchman" owes a debt of loyalty. Whatever defects he complains of, far worse existed in the "good old times." It would be unjust to attribute the improvement solely to the Legislative changes made more than thirty years ago, for reforms had been made at an earlier time, and came in part from within. Before them the munificence of Primate Beresford had restored the ancient Cathedral of Armagh; and the learned labours of Bishop Jebb and others had adorned the Irish Establishment. Nor were those Legislative changes in all respects just, though in some they were grievously insufficient. They not only diminished the episcopal incomes, but, in spite of vehement reclamations, reduced greatly the number of the bishops—a change vexatious to one community without being of advantage to another. These internal arrangements are things which ought to be left to the discretion of the community interested in them, when a final settlement takes place. On the whole, however, the Irish Protestant must be struck by the fact that the best period of his Church has been that which followed reforms vehemently denounced at the moment as likely to prove its ruin. That improvement would be increased by the further reforms which Ireland justly requires. Ireland has room for all her sons, and the rights of all vested interests should of course be respected; the change made in the condition of the Established Church would therefore be a gradual one, and the financial loss might be greatly lessened by the better distribution of the revenues remaining. That loss would be less than might be expected, for the liberality of the laity would be increased when

the ordinary sphere for its exercise had been provided. Should it be found necessary, in the case of both communities alike, to supplement endowments by moderate free-will offerings, I should recognize in this system the happiest combination of advantages. The laity would be secured against the lack of needful ministrations, while they retained the salutary privilege of showing their gratitude to their clergy; and that clergy would be secured against dependence, without losing a natural stimulus to special exertion. For this reason, the plan I suggest involves nothing more than a just distribution of the Church property as it stands. It has been said indeed that the Legislature would willingly pay, out of the Consolidated Fund, a large sum, say £400,000 per annum, in order to settle the Irish Church Question with loss to no existing interest. If such a desire prevails, it can reach its end without obtruding pensions upon the clergy of either community—nay, without mixing alien modes of endowment. Parliament might capitalise the sum it devotes to this purpose, and employ it in redeeming certain alienated portions of Church property, such as lay tithes, episcopal lands, and the landlord's 25 per cent.*—making due compensation. The Church property would thus be augmented before it was redistributed. For the interests of the Catholic Church in Ireland I desire nothing of this sort. If Protestant statesmen desire it for the sake of Protestant interests, preserving always inviolate the principle of Religious Equality, there is nothing in the plan here proposed which either includes the proposition or excludes it. Should an addition ever be made to the property of the Established Church in England, I trust that it will be done in this way, and that no specious change may ever take place which will make that Church cease to be a *co-heritor* with the proprietor class *in the soil.*

* The lay tithes of Ireland are said to be worth £81,659 per annum, and the episcopal lands not yet alienated might be increased in value by £120,000 per annum. The 25 per cent. of tithes assigned to the landlords is probably worth £125,000 per annum.

Those who are agreed as to the principle of a just distribution of Church property in Ireland will not be long in coming to an agreement about details. In determining the different proportions according to which the distribution should be made, we must bear in mind the great facts of the case. We must remember, on the one hand, that no lapse of time can obliterate the right of the Irish people to their own, because, though individual rights decay and die, yet nations and churches survive; and, on the other hand, we must not forget that a prescription of 300 years entitles the present possessors of Church property to a just proportion of it, provided that they are willing to adjust their claims honestly with those of their country. And again, we must remember, on the one hand, that the Catholics constitute the great bulk of the people, and, on the other, that the Protestants have a married clergy. Whatever portion of the Church property may be assigned to each community, I would place in the hands of a board consisting of persons, ecclesiastical and lay, belonging to that community. As to the purposes to which the Protestant fund should be devoted, I do not presume to make any suggestion. Those to which the Catholic should be applicable ought, I think, to be the following, viz. :—The support of Maynooth—assistance given, proportionately to local efforts, in the building of churches and presbyteries, reformatories and penitentiaries—the creation and maintenance of ecclesiastical seminaries and of cathedrals—the endowment of the clergy wherever and whenever the bishops accounted such endowment desirable—and the purchase of glebes—unless a separate sum should be set apart by the State for that purpose. There are so many wants in Ireland that it is only by degrees they can be met; and the order of precedence must be left to those most competent to decide on it. A friend has suggested to me the following as the purposes to which the fund at the disposal of the Catholic

board should be made applicable, viz. :—(1.) Building, buying, restoring, and repairing churches, and making provision for suitable services therein. (2.) Purchase of glebes: building and repairing of glebe houses. (3.) Maintenance of Maynooth. (4.) Superannuation fund for worn-out clergy. (5.) Provision for such educational institutions as to the Catholic board may seem fit. (6.) Contributions to the support of great public charities. Either of these lists would carry out the two great principles of Religious Equality, and of equality effected, not by the destruction of Church property, but by a just distribution of it. Each of them would be recommended to many persons by the circumstance that it would put an end to all discussions respecting Maynooth.

It is not without regret that I find it impossible to propose a plan efficacious for real good, and yet not likely to give offence to some who are worthy of all respect. Needlessly to injure, humiliate, or even alarm such persons, would be at once unwise, unjust, and ungenerous. It is natural that they should see a system which is theirs by inheritance in its most favourable point of view, and that custom should have hidden from them some of its more abnormal characteristics. Many of them have been brought up in very peculiar traditions respecting it, and, if they should one day discover the truth, they will themselves feel a generous wish to make an *amende*. What I desire, mainly on the ground of justice and of peace, a wise member of the Establishment ought also to desire for Protestant interests. Some of the most eminent members of the Established Church have proposed reforms more stringent. Dr. Arnold affirmed "the simple, just, and Christian measure of establishing the Roman Catholic Church in three-fifths of Ireland;" while Archbishop Whately approved the substitution of the congregational for the territorial, or parochial system. Dr. Dickenson, Bishop of Meath, drew up a memorial which advocated, among

other things, the sale to Government, at the rate of sixteen years' purchase, of all Church property, and the vesting of the sum thus obtained in a commission which should have power to distribute Church revenue according to Church work. Professor Goldwin Smith has said, "The grand and apparently insuperable difficulty with which it (the Irish Establishment) has had to contend is in effect this, that Christianity cannot be propagated by unchristian institutions, and that the State Church of a dominant minority is an institution which, *being unjust*, must be unchristian."

In three respects, at least, the Protestant Church in Ireland would profit by Religious Equality. A great weight of odium would be removed from it: it would retain a competence: and, if trusted with the management of its own internal arrangements, it might expect to gain in freedom what it lost in wealth. Freedom, honourable rivalship, and a state of neither poverty nor riches—these are the external conditions most needed for the energetic estate of a religious body. If it has in it any life, these are the things which call it forth. Its sectarian Ascendency is an injury to the Protestant body; its religious well-being ought to meet with the sympathy of all. It is but misconception that creates jealousies in these matters. Religious bodies are far from being adversaries in the sense in which partizans fancy. It is not at each other's expense that they prosper spiritually. On the contrary, despite polemical antagonism, and also real diversities of creed which are unhappily even greater than they seem to be, they have many points of common interest. They sometimes fall asleep together; and whichever wakes first is apt, in rising, to rouse his neighbours. The priceless gift of unity once lost to a nation, an honourable emulation among the separated bodies is the best blessing that remains. A good man naturally wishes that in every community there should be developed the utmost good of which it is capable; nor need his loyalty to his own Church reproach that desire, for a professed foe may be a friend

in disguise—nay, a friend at heart, and the most authentic Church might find cause to regret the sudden fall of a rival.

A Catholic does not believe that under any circumstances the Protestant Establishment could have changed the faith of Ireland; a wise Protestant sees that its exclusive Ascendency reduced its chance of doing so to a minimum; and both may join in the wish that its proper duties, which are those to its own members, should be discharged with the largest spiritual results. There is an interior condition of well-being more important than any of those external conditions already referred to. An Ascendency at once unnatural and unjust has proved the insidious obstacle to that well-being. Those who have pondered the history of the Irish Establishment will understand this. Pre-supposing, as that Ascendency both logically and practically does, that the church of the nation at large is not a Christian community, it breathed into the Establishment, from the first, the spirit of Calvin and Knox, not that of Hooker and Herbert.

But for it Archbishop Usher would not—when peace and war hung in the balance—have preached his celebrated sermon on the text, "he beareth not the sword in vain," and lost Ireland to Charles. But for it the Bishops of 1626 would not have deliberately affirmed the religious obligation of persecution; and Ireland would not have learned to identify the longest and sharpest of her trials, not with statesmen at a distance, but with pastors close by. Like churchmen in many other countries, they might not, as regards toleration, have risen above the public opinion of their day; but they would have remained passive. A soft hand, lost in lawn, would not have been laid upon the central wheel, and by a pressure, perhaps unconscious like that of our "table-turners," have kept in motion the complex, omnipresent machine that held a nation on the rack. That Puritan domination which statesmen have often denounced upon social grounds, churchmen must surely have learned to deplore upon religious. To it must be referred those strange lapses, whether

as regards doctrine or discipline, for which the sister Establishment has not had to apologise. To this leaven must be attributed the adoption in the Irish Convocation of 1615 of the famous "Lambeth Articles," rejected as heretical by the English Church, yet retained by the Irish till cast off by the English influence of Lord Strafford, and in several dioceses subscribed to, as well as the Thirty-nine Articles, as late as 1641. To this were owing somewhat later, those wonderful ordinations in which Bishops who professed to transmit the Apostolical Succession joined with ministers who had been attached to the Presbyterian platform, and who could tolerate episcopacy itself only *propter necessitatem temporis*. These things have a meaning. Towards existing men and interests too much forbearance cannot be used; but of such records as these we must speak plainly, unless we would miss their moral. The anomalies occurred in Ireland, and occurred, when in England the Anglican Church, already rich in literary glories, was entering, with the King to whom she stood faithful, upon trials which have enkindled the loyalty of her sons and the sympathy of strangers. When historians like the late learned Bishop Mant, record such events, it is unfortunate that they miss their true import. The interests of their community require that they should understand it.

The interests of the English Church require the same. I appeal to those who hold "Church principles," for they at least must know what retribution is exacted when the leaden mace of penal law strikes an ancient Church in the face, and when the State erects in her place some creation of its own. That retribution has been Puritanism. There was a cause for those aberrations which history records as special to Ireland: and while that cause continues to exist, so long will the Anglican Church bleed through the wound of the Irish Establishment. The Ascendency which stunts and distorts the latter imperils the former. Had the two a united convocation at this moment, does any man doubt how the English Church would be affected by the Irish

vote? They are unlike in Theology because they are unlike in position. The English Established Church confesses a nation's belief; the Irish insults it: the English is a bond to connect the different classes of society; the Irish is a bar to separate them. The English Church discharges for the English nation, real functions, religious and moral, social and political. Those who desire the best things for her—the increase of her episcopate—the extended work of her diaconate—above all, her corporate freedom, judicial, legislative, and administrative—those who desire such things for her, whether her members, or others not in her pale who would fain hope against hope, can desire nothing better for her than that she should cease to be bound up with another Establishment, the exclusive domination of which is the triumph of Erastian, and the scornful denial of Church principles.*

Those who desire the weal of the Protestant community in Ireland, ought to arrive at a similar conclusion. Some men talk of the two Establishments "sinking or swimming together," but they forget that even if the two were really like each other, they exist under opposite circumstances, and therefore that to approve the one is in itself to condemn the other. Nothing that should hurt the sensibilities of a *thoughtful* Irish Protestant is involved in the suggestion here made. If he holds "Church principles," it must be in the form of what is called the "Branch Church" theory, and the utmost his honest ambition can seek must be that the smaller "branch" should partake, as regards endowment, with what *he* must regard as another branch of Christ's Church, and in Ireland immensely the larger branch. If he repudiates Church principles, still he maintains Christian, and he should see that to restore Ireland's Church property is to restore "good will to men," and a lost commandment to the decalogue of the State. As a man of sense he cannot think it a grievance that in Ireland a small minority should receive but its

* See also on this subject page 62.

share, considering that in England and Scotland it receives nothing. The ruin to be feared by it is the ruin that comes from an unwise defence, and that haughty spirit which does not precede victory. "*Sint ut sunt, aut non sint*," was very well in the last century from the General of the Jesuits. It meant that his far-seeing intelligence was already providing, not for the preservation of his Order, but for its restoration. For institutions like the Ascendency there remains, in these days when the religious aspire to be enlightened, and when even the irreligious are civilized, no restoration.

I trust that among the prelates of the Irish Establishment, some one will be found capable of rising to the greatness of the occasion, and of vindicating his charge without trampling on a nation's rights. One of the greatest ornaments of that community in modern times, whether as regards genius, learning, or piety, was Mr. Alexander Knox; but he did not pay it the strange compliment of believing that the knell of its faith was rung if Catholics were allowed equal rights. It was thus that he wrote to Lord Castlereagh in 1801:—"Mr. Wilberforce wrote to me a few days ago, desiring I should give him my opinion about the Irish Catholic Question. I told him plainly what I thought, which certainly is, that until the Roman Catholics are *equalled with the Protestants*, disaffection in Ireland must be the popular temper." . . . "If rebellion be kept alive (and alive it will be kept, *until every degrading circumstance be removed from the Catholics*), even the Union, calculated as it is for both local and imperial benefit, may become the source of irreparable mischief, both to Ireland and the Empire; because disturbance will as much as ever require summary means of repression; but those means can no longer have the same sanction as was given them by a resident Parliament."—*Memoirs of Lord Castlereagh*, vol. iv. p. 33.

Of the Catholic Church in Ireland Mr. Knox writes thus:—"In a manner, perhaps not to be paralleled in any other instance,

the moral person of the ancient Church of Ireland presents itself before us this day, with as much identity as any corporation can do, shewing us at once the marks of its pristine grandeur, and our triumph over it. Our identity as victors is also self-evident; we possess all the funds from which the ancient Church derived its emoluments and its magnificence. Thus respectively placed—*it* before *us*, as substantially existent, and as miserably destitute as if we had dismantled it but yesterday, and we no otherwise changed from that period except in greater ability to be merciful;—I ask, is there in such a case no moral claim on the one hand, no duty on the other? . . . Is it right that the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland should remain unaided, while it has been deemed a matter of just agreement between us and the conquered Canadians that theirs should be established?"—vol. iv. p. 221.

What Mr. Knox's opinion as to endowment was in detail I do not know. Endowment could be effected by a doubled, as well as by a divided Tithe. I have quoted him to shew with what feelings a sincere churchman approaches this subject. Some, who arrogate to themselves that title, have characterised the Roman Catholic Church of Ireland as an intrusive sect. When a church stood before the eyes of Mr. Knox he knew it.

Few persons see the magnitude of this question, the greatest that remains to be solved. It has worn a veil—as great things do. There are persons who ask, "Why has not the Church grievance been more prominently put forward by the Irish?" It was anticipated by the Repeal question: and in later years political action has been fitful and fragmentary. When urged, the response has not been favourable as regards a real settlement; and a compromise is not desired. Nor is this all. Those only who know Ireland well are aware how many might have had special reasons for abstaining from agitation on what they yet regarded as the chief of wrongs. First, there were those who might have said—"We can be of more use by

insisting upon what relates to morals and education. The present settlement cannot last:—much is in progress;—and it may, perhaps, be as well that it should fall some years hence as now. It is not our duty to be politicians. Let those who tangled the skein untangle it, if they can." Secondly, there were those who said—"The people are starving or flying. We can think but of the Land question. It is not the greatest matter, but it is the most urgent." Thirdly, there were those who shrank from all political action because it might run into dangerous agitation. Fourthly, there were those who said—"We once had great hopes, but we were deceived: let things take their course: we will ask for nothing more." Fifthly, there were, and are, those who hope for Revolution, and, therefore, hate Reform. Here are five classes whose quiescence it would be a fatal error to mistake for acquiescence. The inaction of a people, when it does not proceed from content, is a more inauspicious sign than the most violent demonstrations could be. It indicates that the sallies of irregular anger have given place to a cold but settled habit of *aversion*—one not grounded on this thing or that, but on everything.

> "All my heart turned from her, as the thorn
> Turns from the sea."

It is not thus that the two nations ought to stand to one another after a connection of 700 years.

The time for action is come; and the modern history of Ireland is a warning against two wrong modes of action—the action which comes too late, and that which substitutes a pretended for a real reform. Ireland's commercial Freedom, which was haughtily refused in 1778, was conceded in 1779; and a few years later those who would hear of no approach to her Parliamentary Independence granted it suddenly and in unlimited measure, but too late for gratitude or respect. Lastly came Catholic Emancipation, but it also came too late.

These are illustrations of the former error. The "Church Temporalities Act," and the Ecclesiastical measures of the next few years belong to the latter class. They were plausible things; and perhaps at that moment nothing more could have been done: but their chief permanent effects have been two—to prolong the national discontent, and to diminish by about £300,000 per annum, the Ecclesiastical property which might otherwise have been available now for the needs of Ireland, Catholic and Protestant. The advocates of the "Appropriation Clause" were entitled to great gratitude; but they demanded too little, and therefore got nothing. Their proposal lacked the strength of a principle, and fell. The arithmetic of politics is of a peculiar sort; and half measures of justice do not produce even half results. What remains to be done let us do in time: and that we may do it honestly let us do it completely.

Religious Equality has long been refused, not because statesmen approve of what exists, but because they shrink from the responsibility of change. All action involves responsibility; but inaction involves it no less. No cowardice can shun it—no adroitness, no refusal to hear counsel or to give it, no voluntary or simulated blindness, deafness, or dumbness. What a man can escape is the coming of that day when it shall be demanded of him—"You who knew the danger and its gravity, why did you not avert it fearlessly, or declare it openly, when there was yet time to redeem the past, and to save the Empire?"

ERRATUM.

From the Estimate of Church Revenue, printed at p. xii., the sum of £5,286 11*s.* 3*d.* should be deducted, being the amount of the Boulter and Robinson Funds, which are included under the "Gross value of Livings." The amount paid by Rectors and Vicars to Perpetual Curates ought also to be deducted from that "Gross value." But this sum, which is about £10,900, will be found not to materially affect the correctness of any argument based upon the total amount of Church Revenue. Owing to the want of accurate information, it is impossible to ascertain the precise amount of Irish Church Income.

THE

CHURCH SETTLEMENT OF IRELAND.

I.

FENIANISM.

A PERIOD of difficulty is often a special opportunity. Fenianism has been for some time occupying public attention:—we may easily make too much of it or make too little; and those who began by doing the former will probably end by doing the latter. If we understand it aright, we shall disarm it of its dangers, and may convert evil to good.

As an attempt at revolt, it is, at the moment, not alarming. The Catholic clergy have from the first denounced it, as they denounced the attempted rising in 1848, and as they always denounce secret societies; and the farming class have good reason to hate and fear it. The sect consists, in the main, of poor and ignorant persons, though with a very considerable mixture of young men who hang loose on the skirts of society and whose education has been an irreligious one. It includes, doubtless, honest enthusiasts, who, if the movement gained a temporary success, would fall early in their attempts to check its excesses. As for foreign assistance, Ireland has long since learnt what that means. It always came too late and ended in desertion.

But Fenianism has another side to it. It proves that long-continued discontent, taken in conjunction with the circumstances of our day, can, to a considerable extent, alter even a national character. There are dangers worse than those of a revolt, because more insidious and less remediable. "Fast" politicians exclaim, "Ireland was always disloyal:" but this is a random reading of history. Fenianism is a new and Jacobinical movement—one out of harmony with the Irish character and annals. There is no other country in which, for so many centuries and under such repeated rebuffs, the *instinct* of

loyalty survived so long. Professor Goldwin Smith well remarks in his excellent work, *Irish History and Irish Character:*—

"So far as willingness to submit to governors is concerned, they are only too easily governed. Loyalty is the great feature of their political character; its great defect is want of independence, and of that strong sense of right by which law and personal liberty are upheld."

The great and successful struggle of this century, that for Catholic emancipation, was a constitutional one. Mr. O'Connell never endangered his popularity when he asserted his loyalty to the Crown, and denounced the shedding of "one drop of blood." The few Sovereigns who have visited this country have been well received; and many an Irish noble, of the later race, has found himself almost a clan chief in his own despite.

There was one exception—the rebellion of 1798. That rebellion was produced by protracted wrong, and it bequeathed to a country then on its way to better things thirty-one years more of oppression and ignominy. But its root was in Ulster; its leaders were not Catholics; and it was quickened by the French Revolution which had at that time scattered widely over England, as well as over Ireland, the contagion of Jacobinism.

The danger now comes to us not from France, but from America, and comes by no fault of hers, but by necessity. Slavery abolished, she stands with her face to the light. But how is the Irish peasant in America to discriminate between a prosperity coincident with Republican institutions and one derived from such? How is he to learn that the only institutions which could exist in America might work ruin in an old country like Ireland? He is not an impartial critic. Since the beginning of the famine years about one-third of Ireland's sons have been driven from Ireland by stress of poverty. What if such a state of things existed in England or France? Emigration is better than the workhouse; nay, it often leads to wealth; but the poor as well as the rich love their homes—woe to the land if they do not!—and when emigration becomes colossal, the emigrant sometimes thinks, whether rightly or wrong, that the laws are at fault, either by enactment or omission. On landing in a new world he hears exaggerated statements, mixes natural feelings with erroneous impressions, and becomes at once a valuable American citizen, and an Irish Jacobin. Such is Fenianism. It comes *from without*, though with a ready response *from within;* and therefore, however checked at any particular time, the disease is renewed with every westerly wind. England has now *two* Irelands to deal with, and one of them is out of her reach. In time she may have a third in

Australia. Here is the true danger. In the noble old times obedience might, indeed, sometimes be challenged by the wrong claimant; but in itself it was deemed a thing to be proud of, not a thing to be conceded with a sense of degradation—that is, assuming, of course, that the authority obeyed was itself a loyal authority, the true exponent and virtual representative of the subject—his interests, his feelings, and his honour. A moral basis was thus supplied for political stability. It is otherwise now. Ireland is surrounded by what is calculated to perplex if not to seduce. While herself full of anomalies and sufferings, she often hears a revolution spoken of as if it had been the first foundation of the constitution; and with Continental revolutions the most eloquent writers have commonly been in almost indiscriminate sympathy. All these things work dangerously under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland. Loyalty goes; and the respect for law has not come. Nations are disaffected till their affections have been gained.

With the American part of the difficulty we cannot deal. What remains is this—to leave no fuel at home for a foreign flame to play with. It is one of those periods which require large action, and create an opportunity for it. How begin? Ireland is full of hard problems, made harder by her transitional condition; but there is one on the solution of which the right working of all other remedial measures mainly depends—the Ecclesiastical Settlement of the country. Of that Settlement the Church Establishment is the positive side;—but it has a negative side likewise.

In all nations physical distress and religious bitterness have proved the chief causes of disturbance. What if the two exist in union? Material prosperity can only advance by degrees. The more reason, then, for dealing with the question that admits of being settled. In this question all the jealousies of Ireland meet, as the nerves of the body are said to meet in the hand. Be the question one of legislation, or administration, from the appointment of a minister to the appointment of a turnkey, under all alike the same sinister *subauditur* lurks. Above all, this question alienates those true loyalists who cannot support injustice, which they know to be, however prescriptive, not order and civilization, but chronic anarchy. Catholics without loyalty to their faith may be servile to the State, but are never loyal to it, and they end by deluding, if not betraying, it. The bad musician quarrels with his instrument, but there are harmonies in Ireland still for a skilful hand to draw out. We have to convert into a principle the instinct of loyalty; and we have also to produce that respect for law which cannot exist until the primary laws are all of them respectable.

But the Fenians, we are told, do not quarrel with the Ecclesiastical Settlement. Of course not. Bitterly would they quarrel with any one who set "this frame of things the right side up." It is while statesmen show their wit by keeping the social pyramid standing on its apex, not its base, like the "Boulder Stone" of Borrodale, and therefore keeping it in a tremble, that the Fenians see their chance of overturning it.

What is the Ecclesiastical Settlement? It is one by which the whole of the ancient religious endowments of Ireland were, and are, taken from a nation and given to a small minority—taken from the poor and given to the rich. To the latter no blame. They have inherited their position, and suffer from it, as some of them know, scarcely less than the rest of the community. This is no landlord question. From the land a portion was set apart for the purpose of providing religious ministrations for the people on the land. It is alienated, and the people have to provide their religious ministrations at their own cost, imperfectly, and with the note of inferiority. This is a question not of theology, but of morals. Let it be conceded, if anyone chooses to make the assertion, that the new teachers came with a message of peace and truth. But they took possession of the Church property. Their voice was the voice of Jacob; but their hand was the hand of Esau. The nation at large refused to change. Its Church—let us speak plainly—stands disinherited by ancient laws, and, legally at least, proscribed by recent. This is the Ecclesiastical Settlement of Ireland. Whenever the Irish people are contented with it, expect soon to find that the spirit of Jacobinism has eaten through its very heart. Do they muse over the past? The present "Ecclesiastical Settlement is the past embodied and monumental; and the popular recollections of ancient sorrows are but the weeds which grow in its shade."*

"What, then," it will be asked, "does Ireland require?" I answer, "Religious Equality." I use this term advisedly, and in contradistinction to a more formidable one. The abolition of the Ascendant Establishment would be but one means out of many for effecting equality. If no better be permitted, to this it must come at last. But there is such a thing as levelling *up* as well as levelling *down*. The principle of equality once heartily accepted, men of sense will not be long in finding both just and gentle means of applying it. If the wound of the

* *The Church Establishment in Ireland, illustrated exclusively by Protestant Authorities.* (Warren, Thomas-street, Dublin.) In this pamphlet the opinions of the chief leaders of Liberal public opinion in England between 1830 and 1845 will be found carefully digested, with an explanatory preface, by the present writer.

nation can be healed without inflicting a wound upon any section of the nation, surely this must be the wisest and best course? No Catholic need seek for more. For him wrongs that are *wholly* past are as though they had never been: nor is it for him to think his Faith endangered, because fair play is allowed to his neighbour's Faith. But the objection comes from another quarter. "The State," we are reminded, "is bound by a religious obligation to make a confession of the truth." The truth it has to confess is, that the nation has ceased to possess unity of faith, but that it preserves a love of justice and a respect for social order and political security.

In times not wholly unlike our own there lived a man who was at once the master-foe of Jacobinism, against which he ever bent a Pythian bow, and the foremost friend of the Irish Catholics—Mr. Burke. In 1780, addressing his constituents at Bristol, who were discontented with his conduct on Irish affairs, he said fearlessly:—

"It is proper to inform you that our measures must be healing. Such a degree of strength must be communicated to all the members of the State as may enable them to defend themselves and co-operate for the defence of the whole. Their temper, too, must be managed, and their good affections cultivated. . . . . England and Ireland may flourish together. The world is large enough for both. Let it be our care not to make ourselves too little for it."

In 1795 he insisted upon it,—

"That in Ireland particularly the Roman Catholic religion should be upheld in high respect and veneration, and should be, in its place, provided with all the means of making it a blessing to the people who profess it."

Again, he said,—

"Let them (the Irish) grow lax, sceptical, careless, and indifferent with regard to religion, and so sure as we have an existence it is not a zealous Anglican or Scottish Church principle, but direct Jacobinism which will enter into that breach. Two hundred years dreadfully spent in experiments to force that people to change the form of their religion have proved fruitless. You have now your choice for full four-fifths of your people of the Catholic religion or Jacobinism."

He lifted a warning and reproving voice. "The worst of the matter is this: you are partly *leading*, partly *driving*, into Jacobinism that description of your people whose religious principles, *church polity*, *and habitual discipline* might make an invincible dike against that inundation." What in that day was called Jacobinism is now called "Fenianism." How would it have fared in Ireland to-day if the exhortations of Mr. Burke, from his earliest tract to his latest political letter (dictated in 1797 from his death-bed), had been attended to?

II.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL SETTLEMENT OF IRELAND.

Prejudice is strong, but principle and interest combined are stronger. With the Irish Ecclesiastical Settlement the manly common sense of the nation has been steadily becoming more dissatisfied. Many a wave has fallen back, but the tide has been coming in. The purpose of the sixteenth century—compulsory conversions—generated a *coherent* policy, but it has failed. How long is an anachronism to torment the nineteenth? To put an end to that religious inequality in Ireland which has long been the regret of English, and a scandal to foreign, statesmen is the interest of all.

It is the interest of the empire. How often have not statesmen pointed out that if the union with England has worked so differently in Scotland and in Ireland the cause was this—that in Scotland the national religion was honoured, while in Ireland it was degraded? Men complain of agitation. For the last fifteen years, much as discontent has prevailed in Ireland, there has been far less of organized agitation than during the preceding thirty; but, perhaps for that reason, the sore has bled inwardly. It is only through the creation of sound political sympathies among a people that society finds its equilibrium. An empire the circumference of which is almost as wide as that of the earth can no longer consent to rest upon a centre flawed and weakened by purposeless divisions.

It is the interest of Ireland. Were her warring classes at one, it would be *worth her while* to throw herself on her better faculties. There is such a thing as a good-humoured despair; and Ireland knows it well. Once united, Ireland would have the strength of hope, and could then deal with that chronic poverty which weighs her down. It is the curse of religious inequality that it turns to poison much of the good already gained. In proportion as Ireland advances in wealth, it will resent wrong; in proportion as it advances in education, it will despise the sophisms by which wrong is defended; in proportion as it sympathises more with orderly liberty all over the world, its Church will the less rest contented to be proscribed as a Church, though by laws not enforced, and tolerated as a sect;—for this, or something less than this, is the estimate now made of it by law. So with letters. A copious antiquarian and historical literature has been growing up in Ireland, among

the most impartial contributors to which are several of the Protestant clergy. "Desist," some persons will say, "from studies which faction may abuse." But the answer is, "By no means—if the studies that ennoble other nations endanger ours —if among us authentic history means sedition, while in Scotland to record virtue and valour is to perpetuate them, the fault rests with those institutions in which Ireland differs from Scotland. Shake the bitter lees out of the cup, and do not complain of the pure waters they corrupt."

It is the interest of the proprietor class. We should then hear no more sneers about "the English garrison." They would at last be allowed to strike their roots into the soil of their country. They would clasp the substance instead of the shadow —security, respect, moral influence, *a country*, and all that dignity at home and abroad which belongs to those who are known to be the representatives of their country. They are right to stand by their Church, but not to insist on its exclusive and paradoxical Ascendency. To defend the latter they are obliged themselves to recall all that it is for their interest to bury in oblivion. Surely it should not be still as when Burke complained,—

"Justice and liberty seem so alarming to them that they are not ashamed even to slander their own titles; to calumniate and call in doubt their right to their own estates, and to consider themselves as novel disseizors, usurpers, and intruders, rather than lose a pretext for becoming oppressors of their fellow-citizens. . . . . For this purpose they revive the bitter memory of every dissension which has torn to pieces their miserable country for ages."

Let them throw off the nightmare of the past and do justice to their own gallant and genial dispositions, and they will find themselves beloved by a people from whom circumstances alone have ever estranged them. It was not *their* doing,

"It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
"Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,"

that linked for a time their fortunes with the national grief and dishonour. Let them cut themselves loose from the Tudors and live under Victoria. As industry gains its noble triumphs their body is recruited, often from an earlier race. Let not the relations of the two be embittered by religious wars.

It is the interest of the Protestant clergy. Had their creed possessed ever so much to recommend it to the Irish people, the odium of the Ascendency must, as many a Protestant has assured them, have barred its way. Under no circumstances, Dr. Arnold warned them, can the present exclusive domination

last:—"A savage people will not endure the insult of a hostile religion; a civilized one will reasonably insist on having their own." It is a political materialism which makes light of the feelings Dr. Arnold refers to. Is it best to redress the balance by a constructive or destructive process? If he cannot brook the former, why does the Protestant clergyman talk of "different branches of the one Christian Church?" and how can he tolerate endowments for Presbyterians in Ulster and Scotland, for Roman Catholics in Canada and Malta,—nay, for Brahmins and Buddhists in India? Is not this what the Gospel calls hypocrisy? Ireland can appreciate the position of the Protestant clergy; let them appreciate hers. They are excellent persons; their abolition, as an endowed body, would be a serious loss and a great injustice to Protestants, and would profit no other community:—but would they not be happier if they might live in peace with their neighbours? In England the Established Church, so far from being at war with any class, is a great connecting link between all classes. Would not it, too, gain if its Irish sister were so modified that the enemies of all establishments could no longer point to it as the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Establishment principle?

Why was it that for a dozen years before Mr. O'Connell's death the Irish Establishment was the frequent theme of *English* invective? Why did Lord Macaulay ask, "What panegyric has ever been pronounced on the Churches of England and Scotland which is not a satire on the Church of Ireland?" Why was it that Sydney Smith compared it "to the institution of butchers' shops in all the villages of the Indian Empire?"—that Sir E. Bulwer Lytton said, "the expression 'Irish Church' is the greatest *Irish bull* in the language?" that Lord Dalmeny indignantly exclaimed, "They (the Irish) would be unworthy of being our equals if they tamely submitted to such oppression?" The Church Temporalities Act had been passed, and Tithes had been commuted; and many of the grosser abuses had died out. The marvels of the eighteenth century had waned. A throng of Episcopal liveries no longer made Irish wastes resemble those Elysian Fields "invested with purpureal gleams." The hardworking English traveller no longer inquired whether the mild Sabbatical supremacy around his steps could, indeed, belong to our militant estate, and were not more probably a portion of the Church triumphant which had dropped down on a fortunate isle. The spiritual leisure of a Primate Boulter or Stone no longer sufficed to transact the political business of Ireland. Things had once worn an idyllic, mythological grace; but that was over; and Jupiter had returned from his long and

remote feast with the "blameless Ethiopians." But (to have done with metaphor), though great scandals were removed, English statesmen remained dissatisfied. They complained less that the Establishment was still too rich than that the poor were robbed of their religious patrimony, Ireland of her peace, and the empire of her dignity and security.

And Ireland has been dissatisfied ever since. People assure us that the Fenians are not discontented with the Ecclesiastical Settlement. This reminds one of the good man who felt sure that the hole could not be at the *bottom* of his cask, since *there* the wine was not lacking. Fenianism is the partial and barbarous exponent of a discontent almost universal, and most deeply felt by the most thoughtful. It is with causes, not effects, that we have to deal. A great principle is at once a guide, a support, and a restraint. No Irish Protestant can repudiate that of ecclesiastical equality without admitting that his fellow-subjects must repudiate inferiority; no Catholic can assert it without renouncing all thought of retaliation. This was the principle affirmed by Lord Grey when he said, "I will never disturb the country by proposing any measure which does not, in my opinion, go to the root of the evil. What I mean is, one that does not deal on *entirely equal terms* with Catholics and Protestants." This was what Mr. Disraeli asserted,—"The moment they had a strong Executive, a just administration, and *ecclesiastical equality*, they would have order in Ireland."

How is this principle to be applied to the endowment of the Irish clergy? Many modes might be imagined, such as land, or a secured funded property, but there are two of a more obvious character which have been suggested. One of these would derive that endowment from the general revenue in the shape of pensions. The other would divide the existing Church property between the Protestants and Roman Catholics. Of these two methods the latter would alone be Equality. In Ireland pensions would now be universally regarded, however well intended, not as independence secured, but as a dependence transferred. The clergy could not accept them without forfeiting at once their own respect and that of their flocks; and social order would be the first thing to lose that support which it derives from their moral influence. During the many discussions on Irish Church matters almost all the leaders of English liberal public opinion maintained, and surely very naturally, that it was from Ireland, not mainly from English resources, that the endowment of the Irish clergy should be drawn. Lord Fitzwilliam, for instance, uttered an eloquent warning against "making the Irish Roman Catholic priesthood a stipendiary priesthood,"

while Lord Russell said—"I believe there would be great and serious objections to granting, out of the public revenue, a large revenue of £300,000 or £400,000 per annum to the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland. I believe that the funds for the maintenance of any such establishment should be furnished by Ireland." Lord Palmerston affirmed the same principle:—"I hold that the revenues of the Church of Ireland were primarily destined for the religious instruction of the people of Ireland;" and, again, "A provision by the State for the Catholic priesthood is a measure to which the Government and this House will at no distant period be compelled by their sense of justice to proceed."*

Full justice is the mother of peace. It has been objected that Ireland has got much, and shown little gratitude. In the civil sphere very much has been conceded, and in it a result *has* been gained;—the greater pity, therefore, not to complete the work and reap the harvest. It is when almost unbound that men can writhe, and the last cord is the most irksome. In material things, when a portion of the evil is removed, a proportionate satisfaction may be looked for; but in what concerns the honour and spiritual being of a people, the sensibility increases in proportion as the life-blood is permitted to flow freely; and as light steals into the prison its scandals become more visible. The reversal of a wrong is the payment of a debt. Even the partial payment of a debt is a subject for gratitude, but it becomes less such if you are told that you have got all that you are to have. To preach peace in such a case is rhetorical; it but exhorts a man to secure his own interests and abandon the rights of his children and dependents. It is true that Ireland might have done better; but she has had the terrible arrears of the past to contend with, and multitudinous social confusions in the present. It is hard for a people to understand its position, when it has to live, as regards civil rights, in the nineteenth century, and ecclesiastically in the sixteenth.

I am aware that my opinions on this subject cannot satisfy any extreme party, and can flatter no passions. They cannot please those whose inexperienced politics are enthusiastic, or those again whose over-experienced ability would amuse itself by making a bad system do the work of a good one. Truisms are so dull that many do not see that they are truths. This must be my excuse for insisting upon it that in Ireland there is a loyalty to be preserved, and a reverence for law to be

* *The Church Establishment in Ireland, illustrated exclusively by Protestant Authorities.* (Warren, Thomas-street, Dublin.)

created. That statement is my theme: and the illustrations of it, at which I have hitherto been able but to glance, I shall enlarge upon in future letters. Cut out the heart of Irish discontent (that heart lies deep, and Fenianism is but a superficial though too significant symptom of it), and, although the Fenians will not thank you, that discontent, the sluggish parent of many an active evil, will cease to be fed from its perennial springs. I can promise no miracles. Trivial passions and harmless follies will for a time continue to fight with their own shadows; but the noblest faculties and the most generous instincts will no more be at war with each other and themselves. A just authority will have the virtues of the nation at its side; and in them alone is a nation's strength.

III.

PRACTICAL EVILS FROM SECTARIAN ASCENDENCY. (MATERIAL EVILS.)

BEFORE we enter upon the question of remedy, let us consider the disease more at large, and review the "situation." Among the sophisms by which the present Church Settlement of Ireland is defended few are more popular than the one which recommends itself by the title of "practical." Those who believe that nations live by bread only, not by justice and truth, ask, "How would the Irish peasant gain by Religious Equality?" This is the old stereotyped crux—"How is the peasant to benefit by Catholic Emancipation?" "What practical harm comes from Gatton and Old Sarum?" It applies to every projected reform that does not visit a nation in the form of a wooden spoon, filled with child's meat. Applied to the Irish Church question it involves a peculiar absurdity, since every one knows that, owing to the misappropriation of an immense annual sum, originally intended to provide for the religious ministrations needed by the whole people of Ireland, the bulk of that people, and especially the poorer portion, is obliged to provide those ministrations at its own sole cost. This notable objection has its moral and its material answer. Let us begin with the material, for those who insist on it most, often think that moral considerations can wait.

There are few evils in Ireland, as has already been remarked,

with which the religious Ascendency of a minority is not connected; and of most it is the root, though, like other roots, it may lurk unseen beneath the ground. Religious differences, apart from this Ascendency, would create few quarrels. It has sometimes been said that polemical bitterness is greatest when those who hold different opinions are mixed together in the same society. If this were the case, more of theological animosity against Protestantism would exist in Ireland than in exclusively Roman Catholic countries, such as Spain and Italy. The opposite is the fact; and the fidelity of the Irish Catholics to their faith has been so little alloyed by religious intolerance, that a charge of indifferentism might be more plausibly brought against them. The Catholic peasant is accustomed to diversities of Faith, and commonly thinks it as natural that his Protestant neighbour should walk in the way of his fathers, as that he should do so himself. What he cannot forgive is the claim to superiority. The champion of Ascendency, on the other hand, who—intolerant even of equality—knows from his own feelings how galling inferiority must be, feels his position to be insecure, hates what he fears, suspects what he hates, and in the desire to prop a falling cause, is brought into a thousand collisions with his fellow-countrymen, whose Faith, when he meets it in foreign countries, he commonly respects.

What occasions the bitterest Election feuds? That which at the far-famed elections of Waterford and Clare first set the tenants in battle array against their landlords. A vital question is ever at stake. Something new must be gained lest all that is gained should be lost. So with the votary of Ascendency—he argues thus: "If we lose the elections we lose everything; the Establishment must fall; a Catholic lawyer may reach the head of his profession; a Catholic nobleman may be his Sovereign's representative in Ireland; Catholics may be buried in their ancient church-yards, with the full rites of their religion, and without the Protestant Incumbent's permission." Dreadful visions rise before his imagination. He sees the repeal of several obsolete laws still a cause of hatred. The mystic words, "Superstitious uses," will no longer exercise the evasive faculties of Catholics drawing up their wills. Administrative impartiality may be established: nay, Catholic parents may be enabled to send their sons to a University which they do not account dangerous to faith or morals, and the higher dignities of which would be as open to a Catholic as those of the Dublin University are to Protestants; the secular instruction being, in both cases alike, open to all. He sees the marriage law so simplified that there is no chance of a Roman Catholic woman,

married to a convert, discovering, in time, that she has no husband. He sees Catholic orphans in English workhouses as secure of being allowed to retain their faith as Protestant orphans are in Ireland. Down a far vista of horrors he sees Roman Catholic mayors going to church in their official robes! The thick-coming fancies beset him most at election times. A few tenants vote against his plain mandate or oracular suggestion. Of course he respects their legal "right to do wrong;" but there remains a question as to how they stand in the rent book. The mischief is not all at one side. Wrong is met by retaliation —not seldom at Irish elections the military have had to be called out;—and the dead have been buried. In France they would have been carried round the city on shutters, and barricades would have been raised. At the last Monaghan election a Catholic peasant was first beaten and then shot dead, in a public place and in open day. The trial took place;—the jury was exclusively Protestant, and the verdict was acquittal. Persons of influence asserted that there was no sectarian bias; but the people thought otherwise; and the tradition will hold its own for a century against all the authority and eloquence in the world. A Chief Justice of great vivacity (it was before his elevation to the bench) is reported to have expressed a hope, in the speech he delivered on that occasion while defending the accused, that the Catholics might learn a lesson. They have learned two lessons—one on the ethics of Ascendency, and one on the circumstances under which law claims respect: but these are not the lessons a wise statesman would teach.

To Ascendency are obviously owing the bitterest of the quarrels about education; but this is too large a subject to be here pursued. Even evictions are, rightly or wrongly, in many cases attributed to it. The passing traveller has pointed to ruined walls, and the answer of his guide has been that its former inhabitants refused to send their children to some proselytising school patronised by the incumbent, or the landlord, or the agent, or the unwise lady bountiful. The proprietor asseverates, it may be, that he never evicted anyone on religious grounds. Let us charitably suppose—the most charitable is generally the wisest assumption—that he did not know the true state of the case; that he was only one link in a chain with many links; nay, that of those who made him their instrument, several were but enthusiasts not tyrants. But there exists a state of things at once so complex and so perverse, that the wrong which no one in particular would have done is done by all conjointly; and society is tangled into an unconscious conspiracy. A single wrong wears a hundred disguises. Occasion-

ally its form is the refusal of a site for church or school. A remarkable instance of this form attracted public attention in the county of Clare for many successive years. In a large forlorn tract, extending along the sea, it was impossible to induce the proprietor to give a site for a Roman Catholic Church. The people worshipped in the open-air, carrying stones in their hands as they journeyed to the place of meeting, that they might not kneel in the mud. A sort of wooden canopy, placed on wheels, was constructed to protect the movable altar, and is still preserved as a memorial. Sites for schools, even National Schools, it has often been impossible to obtain; and in Ulster this difficulty is said to have seriously interfered with the just working of the National system, the result to the Catholic frequently being still, either a Protestant education for his children, or one from which religion is excluded.

It is often said, by the self-termed "practical" man, that "what Ireland needs is, not the settlement of the Church question, but the development of her industrial resources." Let us analyse the assertion. What is it that has hindered their development? Insecurity in its various forms:—and whence comes insecurity? From national discontent. If political agitation at one time, if, at another, those secret societies which make society inwardly diseased when discontent does not find a vent in public agitation, drive away capital, the various causes of alarm have still a common origin. Till chronic discontent is removed occasional improvement is fallacious. There has often been a fair promise in Ireland; but it had no root, and therefore withered away. A discontent of which the main cause is a moral one is made more dangerous by material distress. Ireland has long been undergoing a process of depopulation; and for this it is often said that no remedy exists so long as the population depends upon agriculture alone. I will not discuss that question:—in any case it is obvious that a nation without manufactures fights the battle of civilization with one hand. Now, from this what follows? There can be no manufactures so long as insecurity drives away capital, and discontent produces insecurity. If then the depopulation is to go on (whether from an inevitable necessity, or from defective laws), the discontent which indirectly produces it must ever be directly increased by it. Does this imply nothing as regards the past;—forbode nothing for the future? What if in England or France the difficulty of finding employment had within a few years reduced the population by more than one-third, and were rapidly reducing it to one-half? Prove as men might that no one was

to blame, old manor houses would rock on their foundations notwithstanding, and the faces of the prosperous would whiten like an aspen tree in the breeze. Let us assume that Ireland must go back from the agricultural to the pastoral stage of civilization (it has not yet, I believe, been suggested that it should go back to the hunter stage) and must therefore support a low population, though it may pay a high rent. Let us further concede the statement that manufactures cannot be introduced so long as insecurity prevails. Is not the logical inference this, that we are bound to deal with the moral, if we cannot with the physical evil, and remove the permanent cause of that discontent which produces insecurity? From the tone of some writers one might imagine that every fugitive that follows the train of the "Irish Exodus" left his native shores to vindicate the glory of British institutions in *partibus infidelium*. An Irish nobleman congratulated Lord Cornwallis after 1798, because "the rebels were all crossing the Atlantic." The Viceroy replied, "I would rather have three rebels to deal with in Ireland than one in America!"

It is strange that those who, in estimating the condition of every other country, regard continued and wide-spread discontent as in itself a proof of misgovernment, in the case of Ireland refer it exclusively to national perversity. This is the rhetoric of spleen or the philosophy of despair. If it were the sober truth, it would only remain for the British statesman to wish—what it has been said that every Irish peasant wishes—viz., that the island could be towed out 2,000 miles into the Atlantic! "Why do you not make the most of what you have," such reasoners ask the Irish peasant, "considering that, even if a hostile Establishment be a grievance, still you are better off than your fathers were?" But though it has been said that "oppression maketh a wise man mad," it has never been found, I believe, that a diminished amount of injustice will convert men who are still oppressed into a race of philosophers. Ireland does not profess in the present, or promise for the future, any special superiority to the usual infirmities of human nature; nor is she secured against occasional aberrations by the fact that she has legitimate grounds of complaint. Surely these lofty monitors are a little unreal. They have a hundred times confessed religious inequality to be a grievous wrong, but suggested that the remedy is rendered difficult by the prejudices of the middle classes in England and Scotland. Why then should they expect to find in Ireland an exemption from analogous excitabilities?

There are many who object, "after all, the people pay tithes no longer, and the Church question addresses itself to the few."

But what if the few be *that few* which moulds the many? The most influential books have generally been those which influence that select few by whom the larger number are influenced. Various cities in Italy founded professorships for the exposition of Danté alone. What if a book were to find in every parish a man of influence to expound it? The law-makers of past centuries, in their dealings with Ireland, bequeathed to the present, it must be confessed, "a great book,"—one indeed which is "written within and without." That book can never lack expositors. Have the objectors any faith in principles? Do they denounce injustice, yet fancy that it can work little harm? If they do not believe in principles, let them believe in the passions of a nation. Has the heart nothing to do with religion? Can you safely trifle with a Church which ages of wrong have identified with a nation's patriotism as well as with its piety? Is there no *solidarité* between a Christian people and its clergy? Can the priest be a Pariah, and the peasant be a contented man? Little do those who talk thus know that between a religious people and its pastors the sympathy is so close that you cannot touch the latter without sending a vibration through the nerve of the former. The clergy of such a people cannot if they would, divest themselves of their just influence:—they cannot diminish it except by seeking an influence which is not just. It is as in a family, where the very thoughts of the children seem shaped for them in the cerebral cells of the parents. The quick, youthful eye is ever on the watch; and indelible impressions are formed, not only by the lightest word of a father, but by the expression that fleets in silence across his face, and casts an instantaneous reflection in that of his child. The magical influence is exercised unconsciously, and often most potently when without or against the parent's will. Such is the influence of the clergy. So long as the priest is one who feelingly believes, either that he himself, or else the Church which he is bound to venerate, stands degraded (and to one or other of these categories every priest may be referred), a religious people will not think that all is right. A people that could so think would be incapable of all genuine loyalty. If statesmen do not appreciate these sensibilities as they appreciate the proverbial "sensitiveness of the funds," it is because, when discussing them, they move in a region which they do not realize, and the objects of which are to them but abstractions. To many the more spiritual region of politics is one of convention, not of fact—one where everything is relative, and nothing is substantial. A fine lady may trip through the world without touching a single object in *rerum natura*, except through the intervention of a white kid glove; but statesmen

who have dealings with Ireland must treat religion and the affections as realities. They are practical things: and the policy which ignores them is not only "speculative" in character (however stoutly it may lay claim to common sense), but proves on the long run a sorry speculation.

IV.

PRACTICAL EVILS FROM SECTARIAN ASCENDENCY. (MORAL EVILS.)

It is when we look at the question from the moral point of view, that the evils inflicted by an unjust religious Ascendency are most apparent. They are these:—

1. It destroys among the people reverence for the State. Power may be feared and obeyed: justice alone is revered: and to demand the allegiance of a people without guaranteeing their rights, is injustice, and is known to be such. The claim is resented, not as a tyranny merely, but as a fraud.

In a well-ordered nation there exist two main objects of reverence, the Civil and the Spiritual Authorities. These two authorities, though distinct, and the more for being distinct, are in harmony. Each has its independent sphere; but each is supplemental to the other, and recognizes its rights while sympathising with its aims. If the civil authority wages an aggressive war against the spiritual, it wages war against itself. It at once alienates its best allies, and chooses for its enemies the closest of man's sympathies, and the deepest of his convictions. However the war may end, the State must be the loser. If she gains a temporary triumph, it must be by the destruction or the corruption of that religious sentiment without which Governments perish; while, on the other hand, the State may itself receive a fatal wound where there is no outward war. A wise clergy shuns strife, well aware that religion suffers less, on the long run, from much injustice than from the loss entailed upon it indirectly when the people have discarded the habit of rightful obedience in civil things. But a sullen discontent the clergy cannot avert; and this is often a more durable and deep-rooted evil than open war.

2. It destroys among a people the healthful strength of hope. No good thing is expected from rulers supposed to

regard the religion of a people with hostility. It forbids gratitude no less; for, from those who wound our deeper sensibilities, benevolences in smaller matters are commonly felt as humiliations. In every country there is a class which clamours for whatever it can get; but this is not the class which cherishes either gratitude for personal benefits, or hope for its country. Where wrongs have long remained unredressed, hope is stigmatised as credulity; and gratitude is laughed at when the belief takes root, that benefits have only been conceded from indirect motives or in times of difficulty. It is often asked why Ireland has not more often sent petitions to Parliament on the subject of the Church. It had little hope of success. A nation that has ceased to hope has become formidable.

3. It need hardly be said, that where reverence and hope do not exist, neither does love. A nation has affections; and they invest themselves as they please, not as rulers please. The secondary affections follow the primary; and those who love their religion (a contingency not adverted to by some philosophers), love no institutions which profess, record, or inculcate hatred of it, or contempt for it. The Irish have the same affections, mixed with the same infirmities, as other men; but those affections have, by a blundering injustice, been diverted from many of their proper objects. Their imagination deals with the past rather than the present; and their pride attaches itself less to the greatness of an Empire in which they have an unequal part, than to recollections, sad and dear, in which none claim a part with them. We read of the dismay of the great navigator, when for the first time the needle ceased to point to the pole. There is such a thing as an erring, or an alienated social polarity—a condition in which the needle never points to the pole. The disturbing influence is created when the vessel of the State is freighted with injustice. If that injustice be persisted in, the statesman consults his craft, and the augur consults the stars, in vain, for no course remains that is not evil. It is Cardinal de Retz who remarks, "there are conjunctures in which we can do nothing that is not an error." But he adds, "I have observed, that it is never fortune that places men in this condition. No one falls into it except by his own fault." Let us settle the Church Question of Ireland before that time has come.

If disunion between a people and its Government be a disastrous thing, that between class and class is often a nearer and sorer evil. Throughout Europe the higher classes are, in these days, exposed to a criticism which nothing can disarm of its dangers except the cordial interchange of social offices and an estimate of political relations which some will call Christian, and

others brand as superstitious. We must level up if we would avoid levelling down. The battle between the earlier and the modern civilizations threatens everywhere to be a hard one. The former has no chance unless it can prove itself the more capable of ministering to the permanent needs of the whole body. The efforts made by England in this way to retain what distinguishes her from the colonial nations, and to sustain ancient dignities in their place by weighting them with new duties, has attracted the respectful and sympathetic attention of all thoughtful men. But what progress has been made in Ireland? Laws which, not content with the social advantages necessarily possessed by the higher classes, crown them with privileges not only exceptional but unnatural, effect all that laws can effect to render those "protected" classes powerful for evil and impotent for good. Before the first French Revolution the French nobles were exempt from many of the taxes that pressed on the poor. Whether such an exemption rendered them really the wealthier they were not careful to enquire:—that it rendered them odious was a truth which they learned too late amid "the crash of tower and grove." Yet, what are financial to religious inequalities? Many wrongs are forgiven by men who abound in loyalty and self-forgetfulness: but, be it remembered, these are especially the virtues which make a people attached to their Church; and it is our own wrongs, not wrongs done to what we are bound to defend, which the Gospel commands us to forgive. It is not chance or folly, but the Creator of man, and of man's heart, that "puts enmities" between a nation and that which, by degrading its religion, traduces it.

"To the poor the Gospel is preached." The matter is theirs in a special sense; and they have a singular insight into it. It would be safer by many degrees to trifle with the religion of the rich:—the wound would touch less nearly their discreeter susceptibilities. To the poor the world is not a very dazzling snare; and the temptations of sense—especially when the poor are circumstanced like the Irish poor—rather come to them in gusts than cling about them as a permanent thrall. Their faults lie on the surface and meet a quick punishment. They do not close a specious life by a plausible death and a newspaper canonization. They take a vivid interest in the world of faith and in the future world:—in this respect they are, of course, God's nobility; and a wise man of the world, if he believes in prayer, would be glad to have them as his patrons, while they, for a corresponding reason, not unnaturally seek his patronage in secular matters. But what, if instead of so happy an interchange of good offices, he reviles their faith and absorbs

the endowments intended to sustain it? In former times this was the madness of passion; to persist in this course would be the imbecility of hearts too hard, and brains too soft. Now that the iron hand of feudality has fallen down, a dead thing, and that every schoolboy is mainly fed upon that alien pasture, the republican lore of the old Pagan states, what is there which can sustain aristocratical institutions except those old Christian, and especially those Catholic, principles and associations which oppose themselves to a grudging pride, assert a spiritual, not a worldly equality, insist, not upon a surly independence, but upon reciprocal dependance, and by teaching at once humility and aspiration, draw men to prefer the highlands of a society that admits diversities of rank, to the featureless levels of democracy? I can imagine a conservative statesman wishing for a religion that could do such things even if he thought it had ceased to exist. I cannot understand his trampling on it. An upper class that insults the Christianity of the poor, as the ascendency of a modern minority insults it, is guilty of *felo de se.*

It is not their own choice, it is the malice of laws that have outlived their original purposes, which obtrudes upon the gentlemen of Ireland this invidious and insidious pre-eminence. Were it their own deliberate choice it would prove that they were ignorant of that foundation upon which alone true nobility rests. Nobles who but reap the harvest from fields fertilized by the sweat of some subjected race, remain a foreign caste, no matter how long they may have lasted: they are satraps not nobles: they have not the weight necessary to keep their feet on the earth:—in the day of trial they prove but poor shadows and heraldic phantoms—light enough to be hung from their own genealogical trees. True nobles are the indirect representatives of their country, its interests, its aspirations, and its honour; and as such only can they stand firm and hold fast. Ireland had nobles of old; and it is not the best thing about the Ascendant Establishment that it is the memorial of their fall. In Ireland there are two nobilities. The five successive confiscations upon which Lord Chancellor Clare thought it necessary to enlarge in his celebrated speech on the Union, did not merely set up a new nobility. The old nobles, Norman and Gaelic alike, were for the most part hurled from their seats, and nobility was thus "put in commission" among the poor. But their Church survives. "When," it is sometimes asked, "will the Irish people forget the past?" When the upper classes remember it! Grattan and Burke gave them better counsel than they have ever received from the sycophants. Grattan used a memorable

expression—"The consequence of this vile, mean, and selfish monopoly is that your State becomes an oligarchy—the worst species—*a plebeian oligarchy*." Burke wrote to the King of Poland, "It is a poor exaltation which consists in the depression of other men. I love nobility. I should be ashamed to say so if I did not know what it is that I love. He alone is noble that is reputed so by those who, by being free, are alone competent to bestow a due estimation upon rank and titles. He is noble who has a priority amongst freemen, not he who has a sort of wild liberty among slaves. * * There is no nobility where there is no possible standard for a comparison among ranks."—(*Correspondence*, vol. iii., p. 448). If this high truth is not yet appreciated in Ireland by some among those whom it most concerns, the reason is this, that the same inequality which turns piety to bitterness on the side of the injured, turns wisdom into folly on the other side. It is the greatest evil but one of unjust laws that they make fools of those whom they favour. That class become subject to "blindness in part;" and there is "a veil on their hearts."

Early last session an Irish nobleman complained that in his country official persons were all in all, his order being treated as of no account: and on coming into office Lord Derby promised that *this* evil—as to some others he was less explicit—should be redressed. It can be redressed only by the removal of that which severs the gentlemen of Ireland from their country. When their foot touches its soil, the strength of that country will be in them. What separates? What is it that dries up their hand and makes their dignities titular? It is that their position does not accord with their virtues or their abilities. At one time they were used as a foreign garrison; and in this there was a purpose. Next they were kept apart from the people, that both might be held in subjection through division; and in this there was a purpose. It is now but apathy or cowardice that leaves them the deserted warders of a dismantled fortress in defence of which the State is resolved never to fire another gun;—guardians of what their country regards as a tattered, piratical flag, the memorial of every dishonour that has shamed that country for centuries. Let not the gentlemen of Ireland identify their cause with their opprobrium. If they would have power in their native land they must put away the evil thing. The Irish people will not be governed permanently either by a Bureaucracy, or by a noble class that does not represent them.

V.

PRACTICAL EVILS OF SECTARIAN ASCENDENCY. (THE WAR WITH COMMON SENSE.)

We have spoken of material evils, and of moral evils:—both classes are created by a condition of society which is a war against common sense. As communities become civilized they fall under the dominion of common sense; and the religious Ascendency of a small minority is a protest against her sway. In Ireland the penalty exacted for the maintenance of this "unreason" is, that the serious is lost sight of, and that social life has become "a comedy of errors." Everyone is at cross purposes with his neighbour because everyone has been put into a false position. The higher class does not find itself duly respected, because its religious monopoly insults the supreme object of the poor man's reverence; and the poor man is lightly esteemed because he is suspected. The Irish peasant is accused of a deficient truthfulness and justice. It is difficult to speak, or know, the truth, where institutions live a lie; and not easy to practise justice in detail where wholesale injustice has the sanction of law. Truth and justice discountenanced, the moral sense of society is stultified, and no foundation is left for common sense, which is mainly a moral attribute. Men acquire the habit of looking at the odd side of things: life is regarded as a scramble, and government as a practical joke. The reign of whim is enlarged, and industry itself often proves to have been but a graver caprice. Nothing pays with sufficient certainty to make self-control and perseverance worth while, unless these virtues invest themselves in the spiritual sphere. The Irish peasant lives either for the moment or for eternity. The most sanguine statesman descries no sign of Ireland's becoming a capable, prosperous land. He would probably think it less unlikely that she should relapse into an "Isle of Saints."

Why is this? It is because one enormous inveracity has gathered about it a whole world of make-belief. Old design and new patchwork have concurred to make the system so complete that the sufferer himself is in danger of forgetting the perversity in the congruity. Go over a large tract—let us say a diocese in Connaught—and its conditions, historical, physical, social, religious, political, will interpret each other. It is an extreme instance, I admit, but as such, the best

illustration. You find a peasantry, the descendants, in many cases, of those Ulster men who in the days of King James the First's "Plantation" were admonished to go "to Hell or Connaught," and preferred the latter alternative; or of refugees whom the sword and law of Cromwell forbade to exist eastward of the Shannon. Elsewhere time brings healing:—in what condition do the men of the present day, this day of scientific appliance and universal philanthropy, exist in Connaught? First, what is their material state? That of a chronic distress, not even occasional in other European countries, yet not traceable to the ill-will of any class or of Government. The roads are few; half the day you toil across a morass, where a square yard of fern, briar, and coarse grass looks like civilization; and the evening sun shines angrily on the slope of some mountain, brown as the gloomy weed-harvests of the sea, or dull red like the flank of a sleeping lion. There are improved tracts; but they fail to cheer the waste, and the new work, half finished, and perhaps abandoned, wears a sadder aspect than the ruin beside it. You come to what was a village, and is a mass of crumbling walls: one man tells you that the inhabitants emigrated; another that fever flung them down, or that the famine years trampled them out. In many places the population is reduced to half of what it was twenty years ago, and the Exodus is still going on. These things bewilder the wise, and may well bewilder the simple. An able and benevolent man, one himself convinced that the consolidation of farms was necessary even for the eventual interests of the people themselves, described to me what had followed the famine years. He told me how day by day as that change went on which precedes consolidation, he had seen the aged parish priest riding about and watching the progress of it, now from one hill-top, now from another, and tossing his hands in the air. "I knew what he thought," my informant added, "and who could blame him?" And who can blame peasants who think with him? I am not writing on the Land Question. The statesman who thinks it insoluble will at least grant that to mitigate such physical woes, there must be necessary a moral condition Christian in more than name. Perhaps he may remember a certain passage in Burke—"That Jacobinism which is speculative in its origin, and which arises from wantonness and fulness of blood, may possibly be kept under by firmness and prudence. The very levity of character which produces it may extinguish it. But Jacobinism, which arises from penury and irritation, from *scorned loyalty and rejected allegiance*, has much deeper roots. They take their nourishment from the bottom of

human nature, and the unalterable constitution of things, and not from humour and caprice, or the opinions of the day about privileges and liberties. These roots will be shot into the depths of hell, and will at last raise up their proud tops to heaven itself."—(*Correspondence*, vol. iv., p. 380.)

Now let us turn to the spiritual condition of the country. This people fares ill as regards worldly goods—what religious aids does it possess? The answer is this: the parish is often some fifteen miles long by twelve wide, or larger, and the single priest who serves it faithfully, so far as one man's strength may go, starves on a pittance too small to be divided between several. In some churches Mass can only be celebrated every second Sunday: in others it depends upon wind or tide; and many of those who live far away—not to speak of the very young and the very old—are unable to attend it. Who is to console the sick, to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the erring, to avert, to forestall, to break the evil habit scarce knitted, to supplement weakness, to impart strength? One of the most eminent of the Irish clergy, Dr. Murray, of Maynooth, has said, "If we had twice as many working clergy we should still need more."* Let us leave abstractions. Observe that boy with a face full of possible destinies—daring, yet docile—frank, yet suspicious—like a wild animal newly caught. There is in him a remnant of the old barbaric strength, not yet subdued by convention. Is it to be elevated by no spiritual culture? He might be made all that is great; but there is in him no less another character, troublesome alike to Church and State. Is he to prove the hero or the felon as chance directs? That girl, too, with eyes that lean on you for help, and those lips whose smile does not banish their sadness;—to-morrow she sails; she has no more abiding place than the dropt leaf. The sanctities of home, the traditions of neighbourhood and country, protect innocence; but these are gone, and innocence can prove a snare to innocence. The quays of Liverpool and the streets of New York are roaring for their prey. It is adequate religious ministrations that build a fortress round the soul; and these cost money. Who is to supply them in this wilderness? The land is like a land sacked by a barbarian invasion, or newly emerged from a deluge.

Do then no funds exist for religious ministrations? They have existed for centuries. Turn to almanacks and directories, and your fancy riots in a paradise of affluent orthodoxy. There you find the whole "throne and equipage" of piety made

* *Irish Annual Miscellany.*

perfect—archbishops and bishops, deans and archdeacons, canons and prebends, precentors and chancellors and vicars choral. But where are they? Why cannot they be seen? Do the cathedrals, and deaneries, and prebendal closes belong to the Church Invisible? You are answered by the long-winded mystification, which, translated into the vulgar tongue, means this: This goodly ecclesiastical array is a picture:—the largest dignitaries are but "such stuff as dreams are made of:" the cathedrals are wreaths of the mist, the deaneries bubbles of the stream, and the venerable chapter but floats before the "half closed eye" of the devout statesman. The dioceses are ideal: several of these abstractions have to be clubbed together in order to make one concrete diocese; and that one lacks a laity, or boasts but such a laity as a single parish in many an English city might supply. The Sunday sermons are "imaginary conversations" between imaginary clergymen and an imaginary flock. Half a dozen parishes are joined into a single "benefice," and a collective congregation of 300 makes a fair shew in the flesh so far as those mystical records, the Ecclesiastical returns are concerned. In them all looks well; but in that wild region between Connaught moss and Connaught cloud the great dignitaries of the Irish Establishment are unavailing names like those shadows—Firbolg chiefs, or Fomorian sea-kings—that look up out of Hades and pass in dim succession over the pages of Irish archæologists. The ill-appointed farmer, the labourer without hire, the shepherd of the lean dog-worried flock, sees them not by day, nor the bat by night. They are "imputed" by theological politicians. Such is their utter non-existence, that far from having a flock many have not tithes.

"What befel these last?" it will be asked:—"What modern miracle made separation between full pay and no duty?" It was the Church Temporalities Act. Some one discovered more than thirty years ago that in all Connaught there were but 40,000 Protestants, and in many parts of it none at all. Emancipation and the Reform Bill had lately been passed; and the public conscience, even on Irish Church Questions, was in an uneasy, if not insurrectionary, state. Statesmen awoke to the conviction that incomes of £700 or £800 were too much for absentee clergymen in Brighton or Paris, or for clergymen resident, but resident exclusively in the capacity of stipendiary country gentlemen, or of apostles living on out-door relief. A change was made—a change denounced by hundreds of excellent men at the time as sacrilege, revolution, a violation of the act of Union, and a fulfilment of the Prophecies. The "Church Temporalities Act" was passed. It enacted that the otiose

incumbent who had sat upon three parishes for forty years, smoking the pipe of peace, should sit there for no longer term than the rest of his natural life. Then was to come Reform;—and what was that Reform? Who would not have supposed that it would have transferred to the Catholics of Connaught and of Munster, that portion of their ancient religious property which there were no Protestants to use? Nothing of the sort. It transferred it to the Protestant parishes of comfortable Leinster and opulent Ulster, there to assist in building or repairing churches, paying curates, and providing the requisites for Divine Service adapted to the rich—clerks and sextons, pulpits and prayer books, organs and hassocks, cushions and stoves and coals! Certainly those whom the statesmen of that day chastened were stricken by a maternal hand. Another act took away from the Protestant clergy twenty-five per cent. of their income, and transferred it—to the landlords! And thus was renewed the lease of the Ascendant Establishment.

Once more with the tragedy comedy is mixed. The ruinous district has not the silence that belongs to ruin. It is enlivened by a brisk element of controversial activity, barren of serious result. The Ascendency would be too obviously absurd if it acknowledged the Catholicism of the nation as the permanent order of things: that Catholicism it therefore is forced to regard as but an accident destined to vanish before the zeal of a church planted for the purpose of compelling the nation to come in. But here arises the difficulty so pithily put by Lord Melbourne as long ago as 1835. "Pastor he is not; for he has no flock to tend, no cure of souls—missionary he is not; *he cannot be an effectual missionary, because he is not disinterested.*" The result is what the sober-minded would have anticipated from circumstances which at once render missionary enterprize a logical necessity, and render its success impossible. There is a controversy as to the number of alleged converts. Some who once heard of 50,000 converts will draw their conclusions from the fact that this controversy is only as to whether, after countless thousands—probably hundreds of thousands—have been spent on the enterprize, the result, in the main field of action, Connemara, is represented by about 750 converts, as some say, or, as others affirm, by about half that number, including importations. It would be useful if some impartial persons, after visiting the district, made a business-like return of the funds spent, and the results attained. Not a few neat Missionary Churches and Schools have sprung up of late. They represent, as most affirm, not a church population that exists, but one that is expected. The buildings are good; and if a Protestant

community could be raised by piling up stones into buildings, as Deucalion and Pyrrha, after the flood of Thessaly, raised a rapid population by flinging stones over their heads, there would be hope for the missions. Let those who believe in such experiments persevere in them. The zealous missionary may say that success will come when hope is all but gone: the zealous Catholic will say that such efforts are not wholly thrown away, that erring enthusiasm on one side awakens slumbering zeal on the other, and that a blot hit occasionally does good, though not the good intended. The Irish do not quarrel either with diversity of Faith or with missionary zeal: the most popular Protestant Clergyman ever known in Ireland was the excellent Bishop Bedell: amid the storm of a terrible war he was respected by them in life, and mourned in death; and yet he was so zealous for their conversion, that in the hope of promoting that end, he published an Irish translation of the Holy Scriptures. No one has a right to complain so long as fraud and force keep remote from the missionary field, and the noisy polemics remain within the limits of lawful war. But these conditions are not easily fulfilled. Earnest Protestants have openly reprobated much that has been done, and reprobated it both upon moral grounds and grounds of expediency: for when party spirit and sectarian passion are combined, good motives will not always keep men within the limits of principle or even of discretion. Public meetings are held: a fierce organization is got up: it is triumphantly proclaimed that England has subsidised the Irish Church Missions with £29,000, or £39,000 within the year. Scripture-Readers swarm all over the country; and their profession pays well, whether any one will listen to them or not. One of them forces himself into a peasant's house, gets a broken head, and is reimbursed at twice its value. A second confines his preaching to the public road, which is free to all; and a couple of ragged urchins, free no less, accompany his exhortations with their penny trumpets, by way, as they say, "of drawing down public opinion on him." A volunteer gives a condensation of Sacred History:—"The Church was put under Peter at the first going on: but he ran out altogether, and the whole concern was handed over to two men that were better than he: and these were St. Paul and Dr. Martin Luther." A fourth interprets the Apocalypse, and thunders against Antichrist. Soup pots multiply—"At the last day," exclaimed an exulting missionary, "we shall have to give an account of all our talents—the soup pot in the number." The season is bad, and a few "converts" bid. The neighbours know they are shamming, and therefore they lose caste. The loss is handsomely made up to them. A good season comes, and most of the

proselytes disappear. "What wonder," replies the irrefutable missionary;—"I always said, 'out of Rome comes no clean thing.'" The inquiry, "where are your converts?" meets the answer "most of them have emigrated:" but the priest will often add that they went to confession before tempting the perils of the sea.

These are not things to smile at: they have a serious side. The words of Holy Scripture are irreverently strewn, in tracts, along the public way. The walls of the chapel-yard itself are sometimes pasted over with blasphemous placards inscribed "idolatry"—"no wafer Gods"—outrages directed against a doctrine substantially the same as that maintained by the most learned Anglicans in ancient, and in recent times. For their fidelity to that and kindred doctrines the Irish suffered centuries of persecution. One would say that dignitaries who, under less severe difficulties, hold, or nearly hold, the same doctrine, ought to look with little satisfaction on the missions which make it the object of scurrilous attacks. Those who think with the late Mr. Keble—"*sanctum et amabile nomen*"—upon "Eucharistic Adoration," those who have formed Anglican societies in "reparation of insults offered to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament," those who profess to follow antiquity, and who have read the ancient liturgies of east and west, will draw their own conclusions from such acts, and perhaps will explain them when next treating with representatives of the Eastern Church on the subject of inter-communion. For its "Church Missions" at least a "United Church" must stand responsible, unless it stands above—or below—all responsibility. These antics will last so long as in Ireland religious controversy means, not free speech, a free press, and a generous zeal for truth—things which all must admire—but that passionate, yet politic hatred, the joint result of tradition and of fear, with which the intelligent zealots of an ascendant minority regard an ancient Church which they must either prove to be an abomination, or admit to be wronged.

Very grim, then, is the aspect of things—material, social, political, and religious—in Ireland; but an elfish gleam is occasionally thrown over it. News from without visits the waste, and there are men enough skilled to expound it. Perhaps the expounder is an artizan out of work, or a schoolmaster irreligiously trained, at feud with the priest, and with a taste for Fenianism—a wiry little man with a large head, a mouth with manifold expressions and sour when at rest, dilated, sensitive nostrils, and a dark fiery eye—a man humorous yet melancholy, slenderly interested in his own fortunes, and loving his country "not wisely but too well"—boundless in word-wealth, and the more fiercely syllogistic the more hotly his

anger burns—a heart in chronic tempest—a mind with strange streaks of lore, political and polemical, traversing a boundless black tract of invincible ignorance on all practical subjects. Such is the news-monger: what is the news? Perhaps the passing of the "Ecclesiastical Titles Act;" perhaps a proposed law for searching convents; perhaps only the arrest of a little Irish child for selling violet-bunches in the streets of the great city; perhaps the triumphant revolt of some land, never pinched for bread, or mulct in religion, but recently visited by the passion for nationality. Or it is Garibaldi himself—Garibaldi in England—and our orator does not like him. His account of the matter is picturesque, whether it be accurate or not, and is significant to the thoughtful. He seems to fling the "winged" words abroad with his hands as well as his lips.—"This is the man who fitted out a ship of his own, and raised the subjects of a neighbouring king, the kinsman and ally of his king! If he had come from America, and landed in Bantry bay, he would have been a buccaneer! He took Naples; and what did he do there? He publicly pensioned the wife of a murderer who had tried to kill the old king! Some time later he resolved to take Rome in spite of his own king, and got wounded by the king's troops. And now he is in London." Here the orator waves the newspaper round his head, and then reads the account of the triumphant reception. "Mazzini's name was on his banners! Mazzini was his first visitor on his reaching England; Garibaldi publicly proposed the health of Mazzini as '*his master, his teacher, and his friend.*' Who is Mazzini? The greatest conspirator in Europe—a man who wrote a book to defend the murder of kings! All London is at Garibaldi's feet. Great statesmen feast him; poets sing him; crowds cheer him; bishops bless him. What are his merits? Garibaldi is brave! So are most men; so were Lord Edward and Wolfe Tone. Garibaldi is honest! So are we all; we do not steal the agent's cow though hunger worries us from the land, nor the parson's pig though we have seen it rooting up our old church-yard. Why all this Garibaldi-worship in a land that sets its face against sedition, and believes in trade and good sense? Oh, a distinction is made! It is not Garibaldi the buccaneer, but Garibaldi the hero, that men honour! This is what philosophers call an abstraction! Is not England grown very metaphysical of late for so practical a country? Let us hope that when Garibaldi visits her next the distinction will be better kept up. If Garibaldi the hero is crammed at dinner time, Garibaldi the buccaneer must have no breakfast! If Garibaldi the conqueror is lighted to his room by duchesses, Garibaldi the

friend of regicides must be tossed in a blanket by the housemaids! What! would Statesmen teach us that loyalty and treason are what some Austrian called a '*geographical* expression?' Oh, my friends, have you made perfect your hatred of hypocrisy? True hatred is serious, even when it jests. It knows how to speak and how to be silent—how to act and how to wait: it is with you when you are asleep, and wakens with you when you wake. What! is Italy to be praised for overthrowing her thrones, and Ireland to be forbidden native volunteer corps when foreign invasion threatens her hearths and altars? The hearths remain, though there is often no fire on them. The altars stand, though the churches lie in ruins." So preaches the lean Sheik of the comfortless village, or the Prophet of the new encampment on the moor; while the sun drops into those western waves beyond which is the emigrant's home, and the malcontent's hope.

These things are sad: what is sadder is that wise men are angry about them in place of seeking a remedy for them. Ireland is a land of anomalies, and the religious anomaly underlies the rest. It never sleeps long; and the moment it stirs, with it there awaken the school-battle, and the land-battle, and the election-battle, and fifty more battles. Retaliation rules, and every subject is a dangerous one; for wrong is linked with wrong in endless chain of causation or association, just as, in a house that fears robbers, bell is so linked with bell that a mouse cannot take a leap in the dark without danger of waking the parish. Neighbourly relations are vitiated by mutual distrust; generous intentions are chilled by suspicions too natural, though often unjust; the kindly are made morose, because kindness has often been ill-requited; and the frank are made secret in self-defence. There is no extricating the present from the past; and there is nothing in that past which is not interpreted in an opposite way by the two parties. We have to ford the Boyne in all weathers, and the Derry 'Prentices have never fired their last gun. Life is a long wrangle; and each party strings together its wrongs in lineal succession from the Reformation to the Revolution, and from the Revolution to the last election;—the concatenation is complete on both sides, and the social fabric becomes a "house that Jack built," not a house that will keep out the rain. In a natural state of things evil is overcome by good, and bad instincts are over-ruled to subserve the common weal: in a society of which something unnatural is the centre or moving power, the opposite is the case;—the good is frustrated, the whole is worse than the parts, and all things "work together" for evil. Society seems to crystallize

itself according to some law of antagonism; its atoms are drawn out of their natural position, and ranged against each other point to point. No country is richer than Ireland in all the elements of virtue and happiness, but one might say that the malignant spirit of the fairy-tale had found entrance at the birth-day feast, and turned blessing into malediction.

It comes to this: disown allegiance to common law, and you leave behind you the sanc in social relations. Proportion becomes impossible: consistency is consistent evil; wisdom spends itself in patching folly's work, and courage in sustaining what is noxious. Noble breasts are troubled with the heart-burn of objectless affections, and wander into erroneous ways; while the champions of order squander a barren loyalty—unfruitful as the works of darkness themselves—upon institutions neither venerable nor vital, and at war with those that are both. Patriotism does not find it worth while to be reasonable; and when the inevitable disappointment comes, the credulity of youth ends in the political scepticism, perhaps in the cynical corruption, of middle age. Results are not looked for: people meet about business, and drift into anecdote about some statesman who inspected Galway harbour with the aid of a lantern, or tried his 'prentice hand on a nation by insulting its bishops. Those who never forgive, seem ominously callous to wrong. Everything follows the law of the fantastic, and therefore nothing is felt to be fantastic, just as water does not weigh in water, nor air in air. Political relations are accepted without being believed in, as an exchange of counters not redeemable in coin. Words have merged their real in a conventional meaning: "Church" has no reference to a people's religion; and "Law" does not imply a nation's sanction to that which is lawful and right. There is one charge that cannot be brought against this system—that of deception; for that vice cannot exist where credence is neither expected nor desired—nay, where great Functionaries of State would feel aggrieved if supposed to mean what they say. The huge inveracity that makes Government a jest finds an apt illustration in the marvellous "Declaration" with which the Lord Lieutenant attests his fitness to rule—one of the many instances in which a system reveals its true character by an involuntary caricature. Let us try to fancy the scene. His Excellency is some dignified person who, while breathing his native air, lived for business, and shunned stage effects. He lands at Kingstown; a great crowd follows him through Dublin. All good is believed of one who smiles, and bows, is clothed with the Queen's name, and has not had time to refuse an application. He reaches the Castle. The great officers of the household

receive him—the heads of the law—the civil and military authorities, and various other grave persons belonging, some to the "Church as by law established," and some to the Church as by law dis-established. He looks round the circle with benignity, and then makes a solemn Declaration attested by a second Declaration, which last affirms, "in the presence of God" (but insincerely), that the former one is made sincerely, "without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever." What does the former, and sincere, declaration declare? Briefly, that the creed of the nation he is sent to govern is false, and its worship "idolatrous!" Was ever, in east or west, such a salam given, on such an occasion, to a whole people? Why adventure upon so much excited theology in high places merely to inflict an outrage, the substance of which a cab-driver could condense into three words of one syllable each? In what condition is a country in which such a feat excites little surprise? If the Representative of the Sovereign were, on so critical an occasion, only—let us say—to cut a somerset, it would be thought in doubtful taste. To inaugarate his reign by a formal declaration that he was sent to rule a nation of idolators, while, perhaps, the Governor-General of India is lavishing smiles on the priesthood of a Buddhist Temple, or enriching it with some lost trophy, this, even in Ireland, must be serious, if aught of serious remains in the land. His next public declaration may be that in administering a vast system of education, charged with being Governmental, he will religiously abstain from all that can influence, however indirectly, the belief of those idolatrous millions!

In short, the whole system is a flight of bad poetry, and we want a little prose to it—"a pennyworth of bread" to all this sack. I have endeavoured here and elsewhere to indicate the remedy. It consists in political reality. "In Ireland there exist, surrounded by many more conspicuous objects which are but appearances and pageantries, two principal things—realities. These are the people of Ireland, and the Church of that people. These two things have wrestled with the centuries, and remain. * * A wise legislation is that which moulds itself upon the great realities of a nation, not that which hangs itself like a garment about the framework of illusory shews."* Too much in Ireland partakes of the illusory. Irish agriculture does not meet—probably does not deserve—much respect from the farmers of the Lothians: Irish commerce is looked on as not altogether

* *The Church Establishment in Ireland, illustrated by Protestant Authorities.* Preface, p. xi. (Warren, Thomas-street, Dublin.)

business-like by Liverpool and Manchester: the Irish nobility complain that they do not possess the full influence at home, or respect elsewhere, enjoyed by their order in England: the Irish Church Establishment is the least Irish thing in Ireland. In the mean time the two chief realities of Ireland are the two things most carefully ignored by the chief institution of Ireland. "Statesmanship is not a department of scene-painting: and a mock court, *however appropriate in its place*, is not that 'pattern on the mount' after which a whole kingdom should model itself."* For thirty years the word "sham" has been shaking down, in a thousand brains, traditions, false and true; and with the word "unreal," began a movement which has built a thousand Churches. The office of the Lord Lieutenant has often been denounced of late as an idle pageantry. That is the reason why it should be preserved—together with the wonderful "Declaration" that illustrates it—preserved as the type and bond of a whole world of political millinery, until the master-mischief has been dealt with, and the removal of a narrow Ascendency, which no longer possesses a meaning, has made room for the constitutional sway of a very ancient potentate—common sense.

VI.

PENSIONS INADMISSIBLE.

We have seen what the "situation" is. The remedy for evils produced by a religious monopoly will be found in religious equality. To make room for this theme it is necessary first to clear away a dangerous illusion. The question of religious endowments is so delicate a one that any mistake in the matter at once changes, not a greater good to a lesser, but a great good to a great evil. It is like one of those chemical compounds in which a slight variation of proportion reverses the character of the resultant. Pensions have been recommended by many as the simplest mode of endowment. Such a mode would be a measure almost as odious in Ireland as the Repeal of Catholic Emancipation, and therefore almost as mischievous. It would unquestionably be regarded as a bribe intended to corrupt, not at once, but by degrees, that Church which force was never able to subdue. This conviction has been expressed repeatedly during the last half century by those who have the means of

* *Ibidem.*

arriving at a sound judgment, and who have a right to speak. "Cæsar's wife must not be suspected:" and of all suspected things a suspected Church must be the worst. The hand "full of gifts" would be empty of benediction, and therefore impotent alike to guide and to control: and that wealth which saturated the body would "send leanness" into the soul. Pensions are the least honorable and the most precarious form of Church endowment. Does the Ascendant Establishment of Ireland accept this statement? The offer of them would in that case be an insult. Does it deny the statement? Then all difficulty is at end. It has only to take the pensions, and hand over the Church property to the nation which prefers it.

It is not so much the hostility of statesmen that a dependent Catholic Clergy would have to fear, as their misconceptions, and their subjection to a public opinion, itself subject to politico-theological excitements. In the twenty years preceding 1851, much had been done to make up the old quarrel with the Catholic Church. In that year neither the Irish clergy nor the laity had been charged with any wrong course; the Repeal agitation was dead; and the people still lay prostrate after the desolation of the famine years. Notwithstanding, a misconception arose. A regular hierarchy had in England been substituted (as had often been desired both by English Catholics and by the English government), for an irregular hierarchy subject only to the Pope. Its authority, being spiritual, existed and could exist only in the "court of conscience:" but though the distinction between the *forum internum* and the *forum externum* was pointed out by most of the Roman Catholic Bishops, and by one Anglican, the Bishop of Exeter, persons not used to those terms imagined that distinction to be identical with another and very slippery distinction—that between claims existing *de jure*, and powers existing *de facto*—both of which refer to the *forum externum*, or civil court, and challenge the nation as a political community. Ireland had nothing to do either with the misconception or the new hierarchy: yet she found herself under a penal law, which, if it could have been enforced, would have either sent the whole of her Bishops to prison, after they had ceased to be able to pay fines, or would have substituted for a hierarchy fourteen centuries old, that system of "vicars apostolical" which prevails in new missions and barbarous lands. What would have been the consequence if the proscribed Clergy had also been a pensioned Clergy? It is not necessary to enlarge on this topic:—but it is not lawful to miss the moral. Mutual independence is necessary for mutual respect. What is to be avoided is mutual antagonism, founded on wrong, and calling itself independence.

Where there is a donor, there must be a recipient, and there should be a willing one; for gifts forced on a reluctant recipient are commonly turned against the donor. In the case of pensions, what will the Catholic, to whom the offer is made, answer? He will reply: "Here are two forms of endowment, viz., Pensions, and the ancient Church Property—the latter secured on the land itself. You do not even propose to divide each of these two endowments between the Catholics and the Protestants. You propose to give the whole of the one form to those who cannot but disapprove of it, and the whole of the other to those who, according to you, ought to be indifferent on the subject! Dependence you reserve for those you scarcely profess to like; and independence for those whose interests a Protestant State always indentified with its own! Clerical Pensions you think to be all that the clergy of a nation can claim. Less than the whole Church Property you deem an unmeet provision for the clergy of a small and recent minority. You insist on it, against Ireland's will, that the Irish Catholic Clergy must be supported out of taxation, nine-tenths of which comes from Protestant England. It seems a paradox! This is what you propose, not after there has been a century's peace between us, but while you are actually waging an educational war against us on the sole ground that you cannot *trust* the Irish Catholic Clergy with the same Educational influence which you gladly concede to the Clergy of every denomination in England, and the absence of which you would stigmatise as Godless Education. We do not dispute your good motives. But you invite us to trust you and trust you wholly. We answer—'That which you would have us trust to you is not our own. We are trustees ourselves. To hand over to your keeping a people's Faith, and then ourselves to walk abroad in soft apparel:—this is no tradition of ours;—'this line we learned not in the old sad song;'—this form of duty no writer on morals has ever illustrated."

Implicit trust in this matter would be a sorry affectation. Even among those who worked well for Catholic liberties, several made no secret that they valued the system of pensions merely as a mode of changing a nation's priests into a black-coated police. "The first thing to be done is to pay the priests, and after a little time they will take the money. One man wants to repair his cottage; another wants a buggy: a third cannot shut his eyes to the dilapidations of a cassock. The draft is payable at sight in Dublin, or by agents in the next market town! * * * A buggy, a house, some fields near it, a decent income paid quarterly;—in the long run these are the cures of sedition and disaffection." This is hardly worthy of

the masculine mind of the writer; and the time has gone by for such temptations as are here paraded.

Mr. Burke was in favor of endowing the Roman Catholic Clergy; yet he said that, except under conditions at once the most prudent and honorable, endowment would be fatal. To Pensions his warning applies *a fortiori*. He wrote:—

"I am convinced that folly alone cannot wholly ruin an established empire. Cunning must come to its aid. Amongst the poor devices of this sure and natural ally of absurdity is the scheme you talk of, but which will hardly take place, of bribing the Catholic Clergy, by giving to them some share in the Establishment of the Church, and letting them into a partnership in the odium attendant upon tithes. You observe very rightly that this would be the destruction of all religion whatsoever; and when that is destroyed, nothing can be saved, or is worth saving. *You say rightly too, the scheme taken by itself, is a piece of just and prudent arrangement. I have often recommended it*, but for a very different purpose. Many things done from principles of justice, produce in their secondary consequences excellent effects of policy, and for low tricking purposes produce the very direct reverse. As a piece of mere substantial ecclesiastical and civil arrangement, if the ecclesiastical estate was put on a more reasonable and durable basis, this would be wise. In future, something of the kind perhaps will be thought necessary. But this is evidently the part of low cunning, by which they hoped first to divide the laity among themselves:—this is to divide the clergy from the laity. Both will be equally vain in the issue, and mischievous in the attempt." * * * My inference from the matter is this:—that if the Castle-ascendency could bribe the whole body of the Roman Catholic Clergy (a thing not very likely) into a treacherous conduct towards three millions of their laity, not anything else would result from it than this, that they would never attend on the ministry of one of these corrupt and silly creatures. They would call them the *Castleick* Clergy. They would have other priests."*

Elsewhere he writes to Dr. Hussey:—

"What friends would bestow as gifts, enemies will give as bribes." Again he writes to the same prelate, "The being of Government depends upon keeping the Catholics from a mischievous presumption and *from a mean depression*."†

Were Mr. Burke's suspicions those of captiousness or of experience? A letter from the Protestant Bishop of Meath to Lord Castlereagh (*Lord Castlereagh's Correspondence*, vol. iii.

* *Burke's Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 10. † Do., p. 271.

p. 400) divulges the intentions with which an endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy *might have been* connected, and the effects which it *might* produce:—"So early as the year 1782 I entertained the idea of the policy and necessity of making an established provision for the Roman Catholic clergy, that would make them independent of their people. I necessarily connected this measure with that of bringing their bishops more in contact with the Government, and giving the Castle an *interference and influence in their appointment.*" He is in favour of Maynooth, but thinks its great office is that of putting down Ecclesiastical Education elsewhere. "I would, therefore, put an extinguisher on all these foreign seminaries, and places of education for the mission of Ireland." His further policy is thus shadowed forth: "A power might be given to this College to grant Divinity Degrees, and that a Doctor's Degree in it, should, in a reasonable period, be an essential qualification for their Bishopricks. * * * No public course of Theology should be taught, and no Divinity thesis held, without being first signed by the Professor, and sent to the *principal Secretary's office*, to be thence referred to a Censor, a Roman Catholic of their own College, and in orders, but who must be *particularly appointed by*, and *answerable to the Government*, that he may give his fiat." He proceeds, "I have already given my opinion on the expediency of leaving the presentation to the parishes, as it now is, in the Roman Catholic Bishops;—they will be more *within the inspection, and under the control of the Government.*" * * "They should also have the power, as now, of *depriving* them, but under the special reservation that they should certify to the Government the causes of deprivation, and receive its consent before they can proceed to it. Government should also reserve to itself the power of *withdrawing the stipend* from any parish, against the possessor of which *any suspicion* of disloyalty and disaffection, or danger to the Establishment, or the State, should lie, unless his bishop proceed immediately to his deprivation." He next shows how the Government is indirectly to manage Episcopal appointments—"I would rather see the whole measure thrown up at once than not secure to the Crown, in some way or other, an *effectual* influence and control in this appointment of archbishops and bishops. By them, and them only, can the Government manage the body of the Roman Catholic clergy and *secure them to its interests.*" * * "With respect to the *deprivation* of archbishops and bishops, I would recommend the same regulations as in the deprivation of priests and curates. The causes and process should be certified to the Crown by the Court of Rome, *that it may appear that it is merely*

for a spiritual offence, or an offence against discipline, and in no way connected with any question of State, or affecting the peace and tranquillity of the country." He would suppress all Religious Orders, and bring the Sacrament of Penance under the control of the magistrate!

Many, themselves too sincere as well as wise for all this elaborate folly, will reply: "The time for distrust is gone by. We do not dream of anything that could compromise the canonical rights of your clergy. Their revenues shall come to them solely through their own bishops, and be distributed as those bishops please. There shall be no Bureaucrat to dictate the number of the clergy, or to make inquisition as to their conduct at elections, or to ask whether the 'muscular Christianity' of the regulars does not disparage the more nervous Christianity of seculars dependant on pensions. Your bishops shall be as independent as the bishops are in Belgium. We could not ask them to accept the 'organic articles' of Gallicanism unless the State were to accept the faith of Gallicanism." The ingenuousness of such persons will render it the more easy for them to appreciate the motives of those who cannot adopt their opinions. It is not by good intentions, but by sound principles—not by friendly dispositions, but by self-acting rules—that a polity is kept from fatal though insensible abuse. Statesmen, whether Protestant or Catholic, have their own instincts, as Churchmen have theirs; and each class must act within its proper limits. The danger comes gradually, and possibly not without wrong on both sides; and only the very credulous man thinks that he can look into the far future. There are, however, other considerations, unconnected with the accidents of the day, which determine the course that should be adopted with respect to ecclesiastical endowments. Let us proceed to consider these.

VII.

THE CONSTITUTION—CITIZENSHIP.

What then is the remedy? Let us legislate on Constitutional principles respecting the Irish Church settlement, or let us leave it alone. Is it not justice and expediency which command Religious Equality? If so, then the former prohibits pensions for the Catholic clergy, for that would not be equality; and the latter prohibits the secularisation of Church property, for that would be

but equality of evil. What Ireland needs is the just distribution of her Church property between those who have never yet had more than a legal claim to it, and those who have never ceased to have a moral claim to it. She needs this because she needs the Constitution; and the Constitution provides for the good estate of all, both as citizens and as subjects.

Let us consider first the question of citizenship. What is Church property? Hereafter we shall have an opportunity, when dealing successively with the sophisms by which injustice is propped, to discuss in detail, the allegation that tithes ought to be paid to the Protestant clergyman because they are paid by the Protestant landlord. The fact on which the argument rests is a fiction, and that may suffice for the moment. No landlord, Protestant or Catholic, pays tithes. He serves but as agent in the transaction, as the Catholic farmer was repeatedly told in old days, when it was he, not the landlord, who acted as intermediate. It is the land that pays the tithe; and the wrong is this, that in place of being paid for the benefit of those living on the land, it is paid for the benefit of a few, the many being treated in the matter as if they were horses or cows. They pay for their own religious ministrations, instead of receiving them more amply and gratis:—but they do not accept the fashionable philosophy on the subject. The landlord retains that nine-tenths of the property which became his by purchase, inheritance, or confiscation: but the people has lost the remaining tenth, and is told that the grievance, if any exists, is a sentimental one. A nation has been disinherited; and the theological lawyers admonish her not to be romantic.

Let us go to the root of the matter. What is the purpose of Church property? It is to provide for a nation's soul. It assumes that the persons composing a nation have souls, and that the training of souls costs money. Coleridge in his "Church and State" illustrates this subject with great felicity. Even before Christianity, most of the races capable of civilization, while committing the larger part of their lands to the charge of individual proprietors, reserved a portion for the direct benefit of the nation itself. That reserved portion was dedicated to the interests of religion and civilization; and this principle, which in the Hebrew polity received a divine sanction, was adopted in due time, as the basis of Christian civilization. At later periods, vast, and often very mischievous, bequests and gifts were added to the "National Reserve:" but the reserve itself was independent of such accretions, and survived them. In many parts of Europe that reserve has been dissipated by successive tyrannies or revolutions; and it is a distinction honorable to England that

in her this bequest from the early days of Christendom has, to a large extent survived. It has survived in Ireland also;—but for her in vain.

What is it that Ireland has lost by the alienation of the National Reserve? Citizenship, and the sense of citizenship. That reserve, by some called "the nationality," becomes the primary test of what is, or is not, included in the nation. Pensions may be, and have been, assigned to aliens and refugees. The "voluntary system," when imposed upon a people by force, informs that people that the nation has no part in it, nor it in the nation. If some eccentric legislation withdrew from one of the three United Kingdoms the protection of law, the outlawed race would, perhaps, set up courts of arbitration. If it withdrew the protection of the national armaments, the abandoned race would provide, by an organization of its own, or by foreign alliances, for the safety of its hearths. What then if it withdraws from them that provision made for religious and moral culture? The community thus amerced is rejected from the nation. It is not by words, but by deeds, that nations live. Were a ruler in some not favoured part of his kingdom to paint nine-tenths of his subjects black, and then hang placards about their necks with the inscription "these men are to be accounted white men," they would remain black notwithstanding. Here is the 'original sin' of Irish Society. Treated kindly, or treated harshly, they have but seldom been treated as fellow-citizens. Swift was a patriot after his fashion, and his fellow-countrymen were proud of him; yet he affirmed of the native race that they were "of no more account than so many women and children." In Ireland, even in our day, the kindest often fail in that respect which is due to the lower, no less than to the higher class. They dictate to them about the management of their houses, and the education of their children; and if their suggestions, often received much as a great mastiff meets the petulances of a child, are not complied with, they fancy themselves aggrieved. A misapprehension as to the true relations between ourselves and our neighbours has existed in many countries. While we were daily hearing of fresh horrors from India, a person who had lived there for twenty years exclaimed in amazement, "When we took our evening drives by the river side we literally did not *see* whether those quiet, insignificant natives happened to be in the fields or not, any more than whether birds had chanced to alight on them!" In the wildest clan life there exists a rude citizenship, and, therefore, a rudimental civilization. Unequal laws insensibly destroy what has held its own in the absence of all written law. There is no true charity

where there is not sympathy; and there are circumstances under which the benevolence that does not proceed from both becomes an offence. The most sagacious statesman and the most philanthropic proprietor can do nothing for men unless they respect them, and respect the objects of their legitimate reverence. But the law must set the example of this respect.

The State which neglects this duty may plead what it pleases in its defence, but it has to pay the penalty. Its law is looked upon as an alien power even when not as an adverse power. Reverence for law is the duty of subjects:—it is the self-respecting and self-protecting instinct of citizens. The lack of it in Ireland proceeds not from the dissimilarity between the English and the Irish characters, great as that is, but from what they possess in common. In England the law has long been the mother, not only of freedom and of security, but of equal rights, and, therefore, of social peace, and is reverenced for that reason. How stands it in Ireland? We speak of our constitution in Church and State; for under these two categories the chief social relations distribute themselves. In Catholic Ireland almost all that belongs to the sphere of the Church exists either externally to law, or against law; and the laws are regarded by too many of her sons as the game laws are regarded in England.

We are now considering, not the position of a clergy, but that of a people. One way or another the clergy of a people that retains faith will always be supported; and if the voluntary system is unable in some districts to raise them, however few, to a competence, in others its result may be clerical affluence. But the National Reserve was created for the people, and especially for the poor: and it belongs to the clergy, accidentally and mediately, as they are the spiritual representatives of the people, no less than as their pastors. Constitutionally, they hold that reserve, neither as a thing intrinsically their own, nor yet as the gift of the State which protects their rights, but as spiritual trustees for that nation which exists indivisibly in the twofold relations of Church and State. Ecclesiastically that nation cannot be represented by a small section of itself. In one of the Church debates of 1844, Lord Fitzwilliam said very well, while protesting against pensions for the Roman Catholic clergy: "The Protestant rector and Roman Catholic priest must be placed upon precisely the same footing—they must both be made to feel that they have *an interest in the soil.*"

In Ireland, perhaps even more than elsewhere, this is necessary for the sense of citizenship. The old Irish clan system made the race joint proprietors with the chief;—one reason probably

why in a land which has always lived by its traditions more than by its laws, evictions are still regarded as confiscations. The clan system was but a local institute, and has passed away for ever; but everywhere throughout Christendom the people possessed, through their clergy, a sure though limited interest in the land, together with the class of individual proprietors. This sacred and reasonable co-heritorship gives dignity to the people, citizenship to the clergy, and security to property. It is when its beneficent realities vanish that the dreams of Communist and Jacobin take their place. Fancied dangers are always alarming those who do not see true dangers. Throughout all Europe, in our day, the greatest perils are those which proceed from principles true at heart, but changed by some invertion, omission, or false context, into fatal falsehoods. Among these is the Communistic theory which boldly proclaims all individual property to be *theft*. A proprietor class which would save their estates alive, should take good care to be guilty itself of no theft against God and the people. In politics, as in religion, there are facts that had a beginning but have no end—ever-living and ever-energising facts;—and these we must not confound with the facts that once were, but have ceased to be. The "Act of Settlement" is forgotten. The accidents of history are fleeting things: the necessities of a nation remain.

This salutary co-heritorship, in England never lost, was imparted to Scotland when, after a brief interval of imaginary orthodoxy, and real persecution, the Ascendency of an Establishment in which the people would have no part was abolished. Better still might have been done; for the Episcopal community was hardly dealt with. It was saved, however, from that greatest of ignominies, an exaltation at once unjust and unreal. The nation rested upon an intelligible basis. What was the consequence? It became a solid thing. The Scotch Union began by being hated; yet the hatred passed away, while the patriotic sentiment which had inspired it remains unchanged in that never-vanquished land. Why? Because that Union was a reality:—as Lord Macaulay expressed it, England and Scotland became one, because it was not insisted upon that their churches should be one.

It was through such a moral unity that Mr. Pitt, one of those statesmen who do not substitute names for things, proposed to make a reality of that Union with Ireland which, under the pressure of danger, he had effected not without grievous omissions, and also circumstances of discredit that have borne a large harvest in later times. He proposed to endow the Roman Catholic Church; and one of his plans was, I think, that it

should become *the* Established Church in Munster and Connaught. Doubtless, however, it was chiefly pensions that were thought of by him and Lord Castlereagh: but pensions did not mean then what they now mean: and those who would have accorded them at a time when the Penal Laws were still recent, probably rose more above the prejudices of their day than the advocates of Religious Equality rise in ours. It is but lately that we have learned how worse than useless, if unattended by a settlement of the Church Question, the Irish Union was regarded by Lord Castlereagh. He desired that the Irish people should have a real, not a nominal share in the Constitution, because, "they are more naturally open to an alliance with Jacobinism, the enemy of the present day, than in a state of comprehension," and the Union he looked on as a means to this end. His words are memorable. "If the same internal struggle continues, Great Britain will derive little beyond an increase of expense from the Union. If she is to govern Ireland upon a garrison principle, perhaps in abolishing the separate Parliament, she has parted as well with her most effectual means, as with her most perfect justification. In uniting with Ireland she has *abdicated the colonial relation; and if hereafter that country is to prove a resource, rather than a burden to Great Britain, an effort must be made to govern it through the public mind.*"—(*Memoirs*, vol. iv. p. 339.)

Still more remarkable is the great speech of Sir R. Peel in the Catholic Emancipation debate of 1817, for it came from one who at that time was a reluctant enemy of the Catholic cause; while its great argument is this—that Catholic Emancipation, without a settlement of the Church Question (which no one then proposed to touch), must prove a nullity.

He asks, "Can you believe that they (the Irish) will, or can, remain contented with the limits which you assign to them?" * * "Do you think that, if they are constituted like other men, if they have organs, senses, affections, passions like yourselves—if they are, as no doubt they are, sincere and zealous professors of that religious faith to which they belong"—can they, he asks, if this be so, remain contented to see their ancient Church in its state of degradation? He refers to the precedent of Scotland, as certain to be adduced if Emancipation be conceded. He says:—"The history of Scotland is referred to as proving the policy of granting those privileges which we are now called on to grant, and though I reject it as affording any precedent at all analogous to the present case of Ireland, I cannot help feeling that it may be, at some future time, with great force, appealed to in favour of the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion

in Ireland. What was the policy towards Scotland? After vain attempts to impose on the people a form of religious worship against which they revolted, you abandoned these attempts, and established permanently and inviolably the Presbyterian Church, its doctrine, discipline, and government."

Catholic Emancipation, he affirms, will do nothing practical for the mass of the Irish people—and why? Because it will do nothing for their pastors. "But we are told that these concessions are to tranquillize Ireland. We are told that the mass of the people are in a state of irritation, and that nothing but Catholic Emancipation can allay it; but we are not told what this Emancipation is to effect with respect to the mass of the people! Do you confer any direct and immediate benefit upon the lower orders? You argue indeed, that the ultimate effects of Emancipation will be to ameliorate their condition, to raise up new classes in society, and to unite the lower and upper orders by gradations which are now wanting. Will the peasant understand this? Will he feel any immediate benefit? Will he receive any practical proof that his condition is improved?"

He next speaks of the clergy. "You confer certain privileges —substantial benefits perhaps—on the aristocracy and the bar; but you confer none on the clergy; you do not even leave them as you find them; you concede to the laity, but you accompany these concessions with regulations and restrictions, bearing exclusively on the clergy—on that body, whose influence is all powerful, and who of all classes must naturally view your establishments with the greatest jealousy and hostility. And then the connexion between the mass of the people and the clergy remaining the same—the people receiving no immediate advantage, nor prospective advantage which they can comprehend, and the clergy being subjected to restrictions against which they vehemently protest—can we flatter ourselves that the predictions of tranquillity and concord are likely to be verified?"

Alas! it is but slowly that great truths make their way. A consensus of wise men is borne down by a conspiracy of prejudices. The philosophy of a Burke, the wit of a Canning, are in vain, while a Dr. Dugienan struts his day and bequeaths his folly. The generous persistency of a Pitt, the generous recantation of a Peel, prevail but tardily when the nation doats upon an evil thing, and when it may be said of her teachers, "*non obtinuerunt visionem a Domino.*" It is always thus. The individual sees his way: the nation feels the path with her hand, and gropes painfully from premiss to conclusion. It needs but a few hours to suspend a Constitution: to extend one to a people

bewildered with a half Constitution needs half a century. Yet there remains a compensation. The individual advances fast, yet may fall into many errors: the logic of a community is slow but sure; and at last, Truth, a stern divinity, works itself out —through timely action, or through cleansing suffering—into peace.

VIII.

THE CONSTITUTION—CITIZENSHIP.

We have seen how the Irish people are affected, as regards their position as citizens, by the alienation of their Church property. Let us now consider how the position of the clergy stands affected by it.

This question is logically distinct from the preceding one; but it has a close practical connection with it. A common principle lies at the root of both. In the formation of Christendom, as has already been remarked, a certain reserve, independent of the land in the charge of individual proprietorship, was set apart for the nation itself. Its primary purpose was to provide religious ministrations for her sons. How the people were benefited by it we have seen. Its effects, as regards the clergy, were not less excellent. It rendered them at once independent, and honorably dependent. They were independent alike of the caprice of individuals and of governments; but they were identified with the sympathies and the interests of the people, and no less with the well-being of the state. Without the pride or the cares of landed property, they partook of its dignity and its permanence. They shared its security, but they did not escape its fluctuations. They were enriched by local affections and local duties, but not imprisoned within a merely local limit. The sacred bond between them and the Church remained their chief tie; but the natural bond between them and their native soil was preserved inviolate. They were respected as ecclesiastical rulers on no more stringent condition than that they acknowledged their position as citizens and subjects; and prelacies which the peasant's son might share with the king's son, were filled by men at once the priests of the Christian faith and the spiritual representatives of their country.

Let us apply this to Ireland. The Church property is alienated from the people, and the people is discontented. It is alienated from the clergy, and they do not think that all is right.

Soul and body, Ireland turns from England, and the schism but grows wider with time. Thus it happens when a free country plagiarises from despotic, or walks in the traditions of its own despotic days. Let us learn a lesson from our neighbours whose experience is more varied than ours.

It is the historian Clarendon who affirmed that of all men who can read and write, churchmen make the most mischievous blunders in politics. He means, probably, that they do not enjoy the "phlegmatic intelligence." and that they are more conversant with abstract principles than skilful in the application of them to actual circumstances;—in short, that politics are not the region in which they find themselves at home. But might they not retort the statesman's compliment and remark that there is a sphere in which he finds himself so little at home that he cannot be convinced of its existence, but mistakes it for a mere department of state? Certainly he makes blunders in it, if it be a blunder to effect with labour and danger the opposite of what he intends. Thus, while statesmen have denounced what is, with little historical exactness, called "Ultramontanism," they have often created it.

During the last century, and part of the seventeenth, despotic sovereigns on the continent subjected Ecclesiastical to Royal power, as they endeavoured to subject everything else. They had many, even among the ablest churchmen, to abet the attempt; for absolutism was the low enthusiasm of a time that had too little insight to foresee consequences, great as was its learning, and too little virtue to love liberty. They spoke the church fair, probably meant her well, secured her in boundless wealth, and persecuted unlicensed forms of belief, while they enslaved the licensed. The strange pretext of those who strove to establish an oriental despotism in the west—a sort of Christian Caliphate—was that they thus vindicated the "National Liberties;" but by the "Nation" each Sovereign meant the State, and by the State he meant himself—*L'Etat c'est moi!*" By degrees the effects of this paradoxical liberty declared themselves. Ecclesiastics made the discovery that when Church and State sit at the same hearth the more robust power gets his legs at both sides of it. They returned to the belief that the freedom of a Church depends upon a nationality wholly different from that one of which the sole exponent is the State Triumphant, and also upon a living union with the body of Christian society as diffused among the nations—a thing too large to be swallowed by any of them. France, a logical country, ran rapidly round the circle. The spontaneous action of her Church was impeded by Governmental control; while its great appoint-

ments were jobbed by the Court: its learning, its genius, its morals, its influence, all successively suffered; and a clergy which, in times not long past, had battled with sectarian intellect and the vices of kings, was unable to cope with the unbelief or the licentiousness of the next age. Then came the retribution. Louis XIV. had dealt with the ancient Church of France, one of those great estates of the realm the independence of which was necessary to sustain the equipoise of her liberty, as he had dealt with another great estate, that of the nobility. He had thought it a triumph to seduce alike prelates and nobles from their homes and strongholds and make them courtiers at Versailles. His successors discovered that he had thus pulled down the buttresses of the monarchy to supply materials with which to add to the height of its pinnacles. Between that monarchy and the masses no barriers remained, and when the democratic deluge burst up, all that was historical in France gave way before it. Thus, then, upon both Church and State there fell a great retribution. The Gallican Church lost its spiritual strength in losing its freedom; and the latter loss was in part deserved, for she had compromised the freedom of the nation by throwing herself, with an immoral trust, into the arms of a despotic State. And to the State its own triumph was its ruin. A national church in abject vassalage to the State, not in honorable union with it, will ever increase the despotic power of that State so long as it remains strong, and when it becomes weak, will lack the means of strengthening it.

Then came to the French Church a trial essentially the same, but in a converse form. Revolutionary statesmen had succeeded to despotic kings, and confiscated her property. But in doing so they had forced her upon an unlimited freedom. They had restored the hostages which a church, inordinately wealthy and exclusively established, had given to fortune. They had raised a spirit they could not control. Her temporalities gone, to chain up her action was like dealing with the imponderable agents of the material world. The chains themselves became conductors through which rushed a power at once the source of life, and yet capable of dealing death. Thus, as M. Guizot has confessed —the most memorable of modern confessions—the French clergy were made ultramontane by statesmen passionate for Gallicanism. The same double process took place in other countries, and in Austria the reaction is complete, the Josephine laws having ended in the recent Concordat. In Belgium, before the revolution of 1830, the incurable hostility of the Dutch Government had produced a clergy as hostile, and morally more powerful. In some parts of Europe the second

stage of the process is going on before our eyes. In them, statesmen have borrowed M. de Montalembert's noble expression, "a free Church in a free State." In *their* mouths, this means *to-day* that the State is free to deal at discretion with the Church, its functionaries, its laws, its property, and its clerical education; and that the Church is free to say its prayers and forgive its enemies. The meaning to-morrow will be this: that the Church is free to wield, at its discretion, that mighty religious power without which states perish, but which, when long dammed up, sometimes flows over the bound of its proper domain; and that statesmen are free to rail at what they have themselves called into existence.

Is there no parallel in Ireland to all this statesmanship at cross purposes with itself? I express no opinion as to whether ultramontanism be an evil or a good. That depends partly on the alternative offered. It is certain, in either case, that statesmen denounce it and produce it. It will not be hindered by such measures as the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, the effects of which have been two, to deepen a dislike to law, already too profound in Ireland, and to widen that gulf between Church and State which, for half a century, statesmen had laboured to bridge over. As little could it be found in pensions for the clergy, a measure which would not in most cases offer even a pecuniary attraction, while it would draw down imputations that could only be averted by hostility to the State on the part of their reluctant recipients. In France they have not always averted that hostility, though in France the State has been an object, not of traditional suspicion, but of vain-glorious worship. The remedy is to be found alone in those great constitutional principles which affirm the Nation without, inferentially at least, denying the Church. The State, we must remember, is not the Nation, and represents it only in its civil relations. A Nation, when fully developed, exists in two relations which are mutually supplemental, but which can only be kept in harmony while they are also kept distinct, viz., the civil and the ecclesiastical:—in the former alone is the State its representative, while the Church is such in the latter. Church property came originally, in most lands, from the heart of the nation while that nation was yet but inchoate, with many of its relations unfixed. It preceded the State, as the State now exists with its own distinct organization, and did not owe to that State its ORIGIN, though it received from it the sanction and protection of civil law. Church property was a Nation's free-will offering to God:—its end being the spiritual culture of the people, and the independence of the Clergy. Pensions come directly and

immediately from the State, and compromise that independence. Between the local Church and the nation there may be a lawful marriage: between the Church and the civil power, an equivocal, has too often proved an illicit tie.

In the Roman Catholic, as well as among Protestant communities, national churches, truly such, may exist, and have existed in the best times, although they need not exist. They can never of course exist in separation from the universal fold; but they may exist as *distinct* portions of it; and they may possess not only special attributes, political and social, but a character and genius expressive of local circumstance, and adapted to it. In every such church there subsists an equilibrium between two forces, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces we read of in astronomy, one of which binds it to the unity of the universal church in all that belongs to things ecclesiastical, while the other makes it gravitate towards the nation, in those matters in which the nations are graced with diversity and variety. Annul the lesser, that is the national attraction, and there remains but the central one. Abolish the nearer ties, and the local church will throw itself perforce too exclusively—too faithfully she cannot—on those which are more remote—at least in the statesman's apprehension. They are more remote, we must remember, in the social, not in the spiritual sense:—to the true priest they are ever primary. The State can never be the counterweight to the centre of ecclesiastical unity; for that centre, small as it may seem, represents to the local church the total attraction of the universal body, in which lies its safety as well as its pride. That centre is not, as some have represented it, the mere object of an obsequious and superstitious devotion, nor the battle-flag of a blind partizanship;—in that case it must have perished long since: it is that point in which all the veins of power meet, and through which, as well as from which, rush forth, from all parts of the church, like the magnetic currents that circle the globe, those vital influences that sustain the part afflicted, or cherish the member benumbed. Such it is, at least, in the belief of every true Roman Catholic priest. The true statesman cannot but see that the counterweight to such a centre—so far as such counterweight is desirable or possible—is to be found, not in the State, but in that home of great thoughts, that mansion of wide affections, and that fortress of immortal traditions—the nation itself. This is the truth which modern statesmen have missed. They have ignored those innumerable national and home influences which appeal to the Clergy more through their sympathies than their interests, and are designed, in the blended orders of nature and grace, not to sap the church-

man's ecclesiastical allegiance, or wed his heart to dust, but to prevent narrowness, and hinder self-love from engendering professional pride. In place of these influences they have offered a coarse and false substitute, and have deservedly failed. We know the line Bossuet took. If it is pre-eminently the Bossuets of our day that take the opposite line, statesmen have been the cause of this. They have left no choice.

In Ireland no Church Settlement can be made that is free from anomalies: but the present Settlement is one huge anomaly. Three centuries ago a secular ban was laid on that nation, and it was driven, under the excommunication of the State, far forth from the paternal mansion into the wilderness. It demands readmittance: it is answered by equivocations. The denial proceeds partly from the desire *quieta non movere:* but the *quieta* have become *inquieta.* It proceeds chiefly from jealousy; and this jealousy is, in the main, an anachronism. The diffusion of education, industrialism, science, the existence of a world-wide civilization, born of Christianity, though often forgetful of and hostile to its mother—some of the virtues, all the vices of the modern world, forbid the restoration of that preponderating political influence which fell to the Clergy by necessity, perhaps more than by their desire, when they were the sole depositories of knowledge. The genuine interests of Church and State are one. Let their spheres be kept as distinct as may be, if there is to be peace between them; and let each respect the rights of the other, if it would have its own respected. Until in both those spheres the rights of Ireland are recognised, like those of England and Scotland, her place in the empire will be an uneasy one. She will be to it but a necessary evil; and it to her.

IX.

THE CONSTITUTION—THE RIGHTS OF SUBJECTS.

It is a deplorable thing to reflect how much Ireland has occupied of Legislative attention and good will, and then to see the result. Let us not go back to past ages:—in recent times statesmen have planned, though with much feebleness, little but what was good; but in both they have reached the same result, and the *Pacata Hibernia* of one generation has always turned into the *Hibernia Pacanda* of the next.

We must see things from a height—a few yards' ascent, and we perceive more of the lie of the land than miles of level

travelling would have given us. We have laboured ineffectually because we have been but treating symptoms; and we have contented ourselves with treating symptoms because we feared to look the disease itself in the face. Men talk of the poet's "creative eye;" but the timid statesman—eventually, the rash statesman—has a faculty more wonderful still—the faculty that sees not what is plain. We have had our misgivings as well as our aspirations;—but repentance is costly. We have acted like the man who corrects his little failings, but does not look into his conscience, or deal with "the skeleton in the closet." For several centuries Ireland had no laws. That evil is long past, and we have done with it. But nearly at the time that law came to her, Penal Laws came; and within the ecclesiastical, though not the civil sphere, they remain—chiefly in a privative form. The evil is old, and its cure inconvenient. Therefore we first denied it, then ignored it, and lastly equivocated with it. We have seen how the ascendency-tradition affects the Irish as citizens: let us see how it affects them as subjects.

We have lights enough. On the principle at issue our most accredited authorities are agreed. It is thus that Bishop Warburton explains the rationale of a Church Establishment, as contemplated from the political and ethical point of view:—"The alliance between the Church and the State is not irrevocable. It subsists just so long as the Church thereby established maintains its superiority of extent, which when it loses to any considerable degree, the alliance becomes void. For the united Church being then no longer able to perform its part of the convention, which is formed on reciprocal conditions, the State becomes disengaged." To the same effect speaks Paley:—"If the Dissenters from the Establishment become a majority of the people, the Establishment itself ought to be altered or modified." I do not wish to strain these statements; they may be too large, or they may not make due allowance for dissent that is transient, or dissent which disapproves of all endowments, and could, therefore, accept of none. But as regards Ireland they are conclusive. They would be such even if the Irish, an ancient Catholic people, were but Dissenters. As such they figure in a certain legend of the Establishment, which has not however been defined as *de fide*, and which does not meet credence from those who remember a certain fable, older still, about a wolf and a lamb that disputed as to which had troubled the stream. This antiquarian objection, abundantly replied to by such writers as Dr. Moran,* will be noticed hereafter.

* *Essays on the Origin, Doctrines, and Discipline of the Early Irish Church.* By the Rev. Dr. Moran. (Duffy, Dublin.)

Here it will suffice to remark that even if it could be shewn that St. Patrick was the author of the Thirty-nine Articles, it is certain, notwithstanding, that the Irish people at the Reformation continued to maintain the faith they had held for centuries, and that the body which changed, whether for better or worse, was the same which has retained the Ascendency ever since. It professed nothing less than to have re-discovered a pure faith, lost beneath the corruptions and idolatry of "nine hundred years and more." We need not discuss this exalted claim, which is a matter of theology. It is matter of history that what can only be called a Dissenting Establishment came into sudden existence, and that it dissented, with no inconsiderable energy, both from the religion which had preceded the great discovery, and from the nation which preferred the old religion to the new. This would be true no less if the Roman Catholic Bishops had conformed—unless indeed the laity and the parochial clergy have no part in Christ's Church. There is a legend to this effect also, of which no more need here be said than that Mr. Froude, Dr. Moran, and Dr. Maziere Brady have dealt with it efficaciously.*

A Church Establishment is too great a thing to have no meaning. Statesmen at least must assert its true political sanction, as a nation's spiritual heritage, or else reject it as one of the most inconvenient of monopolies, if not impious of frauds. If they take the former course they must say of Ireland, what Dr. Johnson said of her, restricting his assertion to her ecclesiastical condition—"The Irish are in a most unnatural state, for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority." They must say with Bacon,—"That men shall live of the flock that they do not feed, or of the altar at which they do not serve, is a thing than hardly receive just defence."

Why then did not Bacon disapprove of the Irish Church Settlement? For the same reason that he approved of the plantation of Ulster. It was part of a system which has been discarded as a failure, but which was once thought likely to succeed. Lord Melbourne exposed the fallacy which casts on the statesmen of past times the responsibility of the Irish settlement, as it now stands. He said:—

"Why, my Lords, it is probable that if those we condemn were here to defend themselves, they would be able to show in one sentence, perhaps in one word, that we know nothing about the matter. * * * They would say, 'a Roman Catholic population and a Protestant Establishment is a state of things which we never contemplated, or intended. Our policy might be violent, our measures might be cruel, our objects might be

* See Dr. Moran's *Archbishops of Dublin*, and Dr. M. Brady's unanswerable pamphlet, *The alleged Conversion of the Irish Bishops.* (Longmans.)

impracticable: but still we had definite and reasonable objects in view. We intended the eradication of the Roman Catholic, and the substitution of the Protestant Faith. Such was our end, and such our means, from the reign of Henry VIII. down to the enactment of the Penal Code. If you abandon our policy, as you have done, you must abandon it entirely, and you must adopt, not only a different, but *precisely the opposite course.*" The late Archbishop Whately was fond of pointing out that the most extravagant anomalies are those produced by changes unmeaning merely because unaccompanied by correlative changes. He illustrated his thesis by the story of the German Baron, who, after traversing a country covered with snow, tied his horse to what he took for a stake, but waking the next morning, after a sudden thaw, looked up and saw him dangling saddle and bridle, to a church spire—no bad image of an ascendency that survives its true support.

It is a question of the Constitution, and of the rights it bestows upon Subjects. The Irish are the Queen's Subjects, and have bled for their Sovereigns by sea and land. Sir John Hippesley asserted that, according to returns inspected by him in 1810, they then constituted one half of the army and navy. If they constituted a third part, it is possible that they saved the Empire in one of its most critical struggles. Whether that strong arm will be as available again, when needed again, let those say who rejoice in the "Irish Exodus." I do not discuss that matter. But the Irish are the Queen's Subjects, and with the duties they have the rights of subjects. Yet their patrimony —the patrimony of the poor—is taken from them:—and by whom? By the same power which demands their allegiance! Can a people look up to the State as a parent while she spurns them as children? Is not loyalty a reciprocal duty? Does not the nation that pays it, claim it? The law disowns a *nudum pactum*:—what then shall we say of a pact that exacts obedience, and withdraws protection as regards that which is man's primary need? A direct and formal "Social Contract" is a dream of the theorists; but an indirect and virtual contract is that which lays the foundations of true society, and constitutes the difference between a Christian monarchy and an Oriental despotism. Certainly power comes from above, not from below: but though it is not derived primarily from the people, yet it exists for the people. Under a free Constitution the power that is from God comes to rulers mediately and through the people. What then if it not only fails to sustain in elevation their most sacred franchise, but itself dashes it down, and tramples it under foot?

The question is of the Constitution, and it is vital. There are

many political privileges which to the poor are not necessaries but luxuries. What they need is—not their own way—but a just and kindly rule which respects them, and obedience to which is therefore not only consistent with self-respect, but an act and a habit of self-respect. Even the least exacting rule or law is not obeyed with genuine loyalty so long as all authority is considered as at best but a necessary evil, and so long as entire individual independence is regarded as essential to entire personal dignity. It *begins* only when a nation regards a just authority as the exponent of its deepest needs and the sanction of its noblest hopes. What then if it finds in law the enemy of both? That which a nation cannot dispense with is religion and its daily bread. What it cannot honour is a Government which says of either of these things, "I do not see the necessity for it." What it cannot forgive is prevarication as to those primary rights, which to deny is to reduce the primary duties to nullities. "But the grievance," some will say, "is imaginative, not practical!" A sophism! It is spiritual, not material, or rather spiritual as well as material. Restore to the Irish people their inalienable rights in the national Church property of Ireland, and you impart to them nationality—not in that form which you account subversive of the Empire, but in that which is its safety.

The poor do not always know where the remedy lies; but when they are wronged they feel it. An Irishman in illness sends for his priest before his physician:—the laws, therefore, which bring religious consolations to the doors of such as keep carriages, and repel them from those that walk, are laws which forbid his respect for law. He accounts them lawless laws upon principles identical with those of one who was the strongest assertor of law, but who reverenced it too deeply not to recognise its relations with the reason and conscience of a people. Mr. Burke says:—"As a law directed against the mass of a nation has not the nature of a reasonable institution, so neither has it the authority: for in all forms of Government, the people are the true legislators, and whether the immediate and instrumental cause of the law be a single person, or many, the remote and efficient cause is the consent of the people, either actual or implied; and such consent is absolutely essential to its validity." That consent has in this matter never been given. Against the Ascendency of a sect they have levelled a people's undying protest. The Church Establishment that censures a people has from the first day to this hour lain under the censure of that people; and that censure is great and sore. Are the people, therefore, incapable of a reverence for law? Let us turn again from the sophists and the partizans to the great Philosopher of

Order. He says—"All human laws are, properly speaking, only *declaratory:* they may alter the mode and the application, but have no power over the substance of original justice." That which the Ascendant Establishment of Ireland *declares* is not the truth but a falsehood. It declares that Ireland is a Protestant country. Ireland is a Catholic country, just as England is a Protestant one, and resents an illusory confession of faith made in her name. Every moral, every religious, every natural, every human instinct, interest, and principle is outraged by this arbitrary substitution of convention for the truth.

But, it will be said by some, the Irish are a religious, nay, a Catholic people, and, therefore, should reverence law. Obedience is one thing, reverence is another. The laws which still insult once enslaved religion; and then, as now, they confidently asserted their claim to an undivided reverence, and that expressly on religious grounds. Alas! not even the omnipotence of Parliament can sustain an ethical creed which is rendered incredible by a contradiction in terms. Once more, what says Mr. Burke? "Religion, to have *any* force on men's understandings, indeed, to exist at all, must be supposed paramount to laws, and independent for its substance of any human institution, else it would be the absurdest thing in the world—*an acknowledged cheat.*"

There is one thing alone that can deepen this wrong:—it is the plea that sustains it. That plea affirms a principle which, if carried into effect, would deny to the Irish any constitutional position whatever as subjects: and whether that principle be distinctly enunciated or not, its full import is felt and known by both sides alike. What it says is this:—"That you should have no share in your national Church property is of course an anomaly:—were a Protestant country thus treated the wrong would be intolerable. But in your case there is a circumstance that justifies the anomaly by necessitating it. You can have no share in the national Church property except through your clergy. They must not have it because they own a foreign allegiance." Do those who prate thus about a "Foreign allegiance" know that they brand a whole nation with high treason, and not merely with an act, but a permanent and necessary state of high treason? The Roman Catholic clergy and laity, alike, affirm the Pope's supremacy, but affirm also that it exists in the spiritual sphere alone, not the temporal. Is the distinction valid? If it be, then "why these bonds?" If it be not, then weigh the consequence! In that case, to affirm that the Pope can lawfully make bishops is equivalent with affirming that he can lawfully make sheriffs; and every Roman Catholic is a

traitor! What men are assumed to be there is danger of their becoming.

On the question whether spiritual jurisdiction be a national or an extra-national attribute, the East though it quarrels with the Pope, is yet opposed to the national claim from which it suffers so deeply, as a violation of sacred precedent. The border warfare on the confines of the Ecclesiastical and the Civil domains is doubtless an occasional inconvenience, but it is one which the weakest nations have known how to deal with, and is small compared with that of the abject subservience of either power to the other in what properly belongs to itself. As to the *Divine Head of the Church* all are agreed. Whether, under Him, the authentic ecclesiastical organization be a spiritual monarchy, or be a republic of bishops, practically subject in each nation to the civil power, which, within its own limit, can acknowledge no rival,—this is a grave theological question in the West, and free men have a right to differ respecting it. National independence is a noble thing; but it does not require that any Christian should denounce the mass of Christendom, including his own ancestors for a thousand years, or canonise the narrow political dogmatism that would have sent a Bossuet to the Bastile and kept a Zimenes at the plough. Men who have differed on this question have alike led forth their country's hosts against hostile armadas. It is a matter on which, if the theologians did not, the philosophers would differ. "Obviously," one man asserts, "a nation must have all its springs of action within itself." "Obviously," the other replies, "the Church is a 'Household,' and ecclesiastical ties must find their type in domestic ties, which are universal, not in civil ties which are confined within a national limit." The statesman sees the largeness and complexity of a problem that looks very plain to the very superficial, and commonly claims for the State as much as he can without damaging the dignity, or at least the credibility of religion, which alone keeps society from putrescence. The man of the world thinks that each side may indulge in an endless series of pleasant retorts—regards the question as one of taste—and is reminded of the dispute between the man and the fish—the man who was grateful that he had not been created "a shapeless lump wallowing in endlesss wash," and the fish that gave thanks because he was not a wretched being "tottering about on prongs with a split body." But nations cannot wait for their rights until disputants have come to the last word. Let each abound in his own sense, or nonsense; but let him not hurl imputations that go further than he intends, or that fly back upon his own head like the "boomerang" of the wild Indian. The man who likes "narrower

perfectness" and dislikes what to him seems "a divided allegiance" is entitled to his own opinions; but it would not cost him serious effort to perceive that his neighbour is both as loyal as himself, and as sincere in the ancient and wide-spread belief that it is only when the political and ecclesiastical spheres retain their distinctness, and acknowledge a different jurisdiction, that a Christian subject can possibly realize, as well as profess, a *perfect* loyalty in *each* sphere, and also vindicate a reasonable liberty in each. He is a patriot, and rejects a foreign allegiance: he is quite right; but let him be just to his neighbour, remembering that he too affirms this principle, and that their difference is only as to its application, That neighbour believes, on the one hand, that allegiance to a State not his own, would in civil things be a foreign allegiance, and believes also that, in ecclesiastical things the allegiance of the Church to the civil power is a foreign allegiance. In the former case he believes that it is the whole nation, acting through its Sovereign Representative, that claims his obedience, and that thus alone each part of the nation has an inviolable share in civil liberty and law. In the latter case he believes that it is the whole Church—the *Orbis Terrarum*—acting through its Sovereign Representative, that claims his obedience, and that thus alone each part of the Church is secured in that liberty and law which belongs to the whole body. Cannot the religious Nationalist hold his own in this matter without imputing treason to those who desire nothing, but to be faithful subjects both to Cæsar and to God? Laws have a meaning, though we may shirk it; and logic pierces to the inmost heart of a people even though the so-called practical men may have carried scepticism to the length of seeing no connection between premiss and conclusion, when the latter rebukes them. To legislate virtually on the hypothesis that all men must be either fools, or at heart rebels, unless they accept a political dogma never heard of in many free countries, and incompatible with the rest of their faith, is to enact laws which, if enforced, must keep open a permanent political schism, and if not enforced, must render law at once hated because oppressive, and despised because impotent.

Those who denounce disloyalty should ask themselves whether the time has not come when every statesman should be deemed disloyal who omits any effort to place the Irish people under those circumstances which, in England, produce loyalty. It is not necessary to enlarge on this subject, but a word may be said to dispel certain illusions. Some people observe, "Fenianism looked serious last May, but it has blown over." It has blown over like a wind that returns. There are two Irelands, one in

Europe and one in America, and these two are in sympathy. Another race exists, also, in both continents, but exists in antagonism. Every opportune season will waft back Fenianism; and if a lull there be, it should be used to render that Ireland with which alone we can deal as little susceptive as possible of its influence. Others observe: "But the Fenians have no quarrel with the Church Establishment." Simpletons! of course they have not; just as, according to Burke, the most advanced Jacobins of the French Revolution did not dislike the corruptions of the old monarchy, viz., because it was the monarchy itself, not the corruptions connected with it, which they intended to remove. "But the Fenians are comparatively few!" Are not a few sparks near a magazine dangerous? Above all, supposing them to be few, what is the condition of the many? That is the real point at issue. It is the *negative* danger, not the positive, that a true statesman would fear; and of this we hear nothing. Let us assume that the positively disloyal were put down by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act (though it hardly answers to be always putting down rebellions); but how are we to deal with those who, if they have no definitely disloyal aims, have yet no loyal *principles* of a reliable sort, and whose loyal *instincts* (for of these there is no lack) being allowed no safe investment may, at any moment, prove snares to practical loyalty?

"But," it is sometimes said, "the grave and influential should banish whatever disloyalty exists among the masses." How is this to be effected? Loyal they may themselves be, but contented in that case they cannot be; for their loyalty must itself excite in them a profound discontent at a state of things both unjust in itself, and the cause of disloyalty in multitudes. They cannot play the hypocrite, and if they did, they would deceive none. Secret societies have ever been prohibited, and their members are denied the Sacraments; but that does not exorcise the danger. What more remains to be done? To argue with the malcontent is to walk upon glowing embers. That a wrong exists an honest man could not deny, especially as most English liberal statesmen have affirmed it. He might say that it is a duty to bear wrong patiently—but that sounds rather flat. He might prove that if any sudden calamity overtook England, it would fall upon Ireland with an equal weight—doubtless it would; but some people have a taste for revenge. He might show that the parallel between Ireland and certain continental countries is illusory or imperfect—but the consequence does not depend on that which is, but that which is believed to be. On what principle is the grave man to argue with the angry man?

Is he to admit that abstract right to resistance on which most modern statesmen have insisted, but to deny the existence in Ireland of a case urgent enough to justify resistance? Or is he to prove that success is improbable? He may be quite right in such statements, but he will be told that these are matters of *fact*, and that though he may speak with authority upon a point of religion or morals, yet on a matter of fact others are as good judges as he. Is he to entrench himself within the principle of passive obedience and the divine right of kings? It is a little late in the day for this course—which, besides, would be treason against the Revolution of 1688. In short, the grave man has to keep silence; and the statesman would do better to discharge his own imperative duties, and see that the commonwealth receives no harm, than expect that others should work miracles to prevent misrule from reaping misadventure. The discontent of the thoughtful few, no matter how just or how guarded, is the disaffection of the many. It is a duty to denounce disloyalty, but the negative preaching avails nothing. What avails is, to preach loyalty, and to preach it with that sympathetic and moral might which alone makes it the habit of a nation's soul. But the true preachers of a nation are the circumstances among which it lives.

I end as I began. It is a question of the Constitution. Let those who regard that constitution as "the citizenship of no mean city" desist from their dishonest surprise because the Irish people resents exclusion from an essential part of it. Let them at least make their election, and not abuse men with the same breath for remaining bad subjects, and for aspiring after the conditions under which Englishmen and Scotchmen prove good subjects. Nothing can be done by scolding. There is an old adage, "you can lead an Irishman, but you cannot drive him." Nothing can be done by rhetoric: the Irishman is a rhetorician himself, and rhetoric takes no hold of him. Nothing can be done by sophisms. There are a thousand pretty ways of colouring the Ascendency of a minority: they feast in their rich succession the eye that appreciates art: by the Irish those delicate tints are simply unseen. An evanishing oppression may "die like the dolphin;" but the Irish are in this matter colour-blind. They have noted Ascendency steadily, but in its form alone; and the dread shape is known of old. It rose above the horizon of modern history, a cloud "like a man's hand;" and as it advanced there were blood-drops on the flints below. In later times it has grotesquely combined the grand with the familiar, the remote with the near, now lifting a finger of scorn amid stormy heavens, now disporting itself about the poor man's pocket. We have to

cut ourselves adrift from this dolorous past, not to walk delicately, and deprecate allusion to that which we perpetuate. We have to lift the Irish peasant out of the mire of political pretences, and rhetorical ethics, and to plant his feet upon the rock. We have to place him in the "large room" of the Constitution.

X.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION.—SUMMARY.

Let us sum up what we seen as to the connection between the Church question, and the constitutional position of Ireland. There are subjects which become difficult from their offensive simplicity. Given this case:—certain persons 300 years ago deprived a nation of its religious endowments for ends which have been frustrated. What is to be done? The answer "restore those endowments to their just purposes," would be simple. Consequently the very clever people devise reasons for not doing so; and of these reasons there are fifty.

Or again, the case may be put thus:—a whole people, in the very centre of a mighty empire, is malcontent. In civil matters we treat it much like England and Scotland: in religious, we treat it in an opposite manner. How shall we deal with this malcontent people? It would be simple to answer, "make them contented by giving them their rights." Consequently the very clever people devise reasons for not doing so; and of these reasons there are a hundred.

The question is not one of polemics. The State has not to pronounce between contending tenets on its own authority. It has no faculty for such decisions. A State knows as much of theology as the nation knows—and no more. It has a conscience, and its duty is to confess its knowledge—and its ignorance. Among us it has to confess that the three kingdoms have lost religious unity, but continue to honour Christianity as it exists in its more permanent forms. Doubtless it would be better if it could truly confess that Faith remained one: but as matters stand, it is more conscientious to confess the fact than the fiction.

The question is not one of finance. It is not necessary that the clergy should be rich. This is what is needful:—that they should be neither proscribed by the State, nor its slaves;—that

they should be at once independent ministers of the gospel, and equal citizens in a free country.

The question is not one of strategy. A State that seeks to corrupt or weaken the Church is as short-sighted as the Clergy that would undermine the civil power. These are tortuosities that end in shame. The greatest return which a beneficent State can receive from a Church is the only one worth its acceptance, viz., the faithful and efficacious discharge of those spiritual functions on which social order depends. A servile clergy ends by being the ruin of the State which has corrupted it.

The Irish Church question is a moral and constitutional one. Ought the Irish, or ought they not, to revere the constitution? If they ought not, then of course they should wish, at any cost, for a new order of things—one in which it would be possible to respond to honorable protection by hearty allegiance. If they ought, then they must be aggrieved at not having the benefits of that constitution. In England and Scotland a "constitution in Church and State" means that the people obey the State and possess the Church they believe in:—in Ireland it means that they obey the State; and that the Church which denounces them is exalted over their heads.

There is a noble task before us; let us not look at it with despondency. We have run round from coercion to palliatives, and from palliatives to coercion, in vain; and it is time that statesmen should deliver themselves from the self-imposed penance of this treadmill. That there remains one measure for Ireland not yet tried, is the one source of hope. We have sown much: it is time to reap. Many of the measures passed have been excellent; yet some of them have aggravated the difficulty;—a signal proof that it is worse than in vain to piece the old garment of monopoly with the patchwork of just legislation. We have educated a generation, and anomalies which a barbaric race bore as they bore frost in winter, bite them more shrewdly than of old. Civil freedom has enriched many Catholics; and if they see a file of their poor fellow-countrymen kneeling in the rain outside a barn-like chapel, the spectacle has a more grim look than it would have worn last century. Many have travelled; some may have admired the mightiest of Gothic Cathedrals recently completed for Catholic worship by the Protestant King of Prussia. In France, in Belgium, in Prussia, in Austria, they find more religions than one respected and endowed, and the education of each religious body conducted in accordance with its conscientious desires; but neither under the more despotic Governments of the Continent, nor among the Republics beyond the Atlantic, are they startled by an ascen-

dency like that which fills the foreigner in Ireland with amazement. Around us, as well as within our border, things are not as they were. Races that for centuries had enjoyed material prosperity and religious peace, have sought and won, not always by the most regular means, a nationality not theirs for centuries. Ireland desires a share in her national Church property, because she has advanced in civilization. Modern statesmen have this to boast of:—they have so far elevated the condition of the Irish that less than their rights will not satisfy them. Their forefathers were often put off with Penal Laws relaxed "for a time not definite;" but for the Catholics of our day the "uncovenanted mercies" of the Constitution do not suffice. Their forefathers were allowed the Constitution in the "non-natural sense:" they want it in the sense in which their Protestant brethren possess it.

In this matter England as well as Ireland has a vital interest, both ecclesiastical and civil. Let us begin with the former. The specific mode of dealing with the Irish Church question here recommended, is the one mode which would tend to the safety, not danger of the English Church. This has already been asserted on historical and theological grounds; but from whatever point the subject is regarded, our conclusion must be the same. That Religious Equality without which Ireland can never, unless she suffers a total depravation of morals, lose the sense of present, and the memory of past wrong, will be reached ultimately, and will, in all probability, be reached by one of two ways. If it is reached by the "secularization" of Church property—that is by its destruction—the victory belongs to the adherents of the "voluntary system," and a precedent is at once established, not only as applicable to England as to Ireland, but sure to be urged as such, since in England there are many whose aspirations can thus *alone* be satisfied. On the other hand, if it is reached by a just distribution of the Church property, then we adopt a policy grounded on circumstances obviously not applicable to England. At the Reformation England became Protestant: a Protestant, or, as it is with more discrimination called, an Anglican Church, was consequently established; from this church the dissenting sects have seceded at various periods long subsequent to its establishment, and so far from demanding a share in its property, one main cause of their secession was, and is, that they commonly disapprove of endowments. Again—the Dissenters have not only a recent, but a fragmentary existence. Unlike Catholic Ireland, they consist of numerous bodies at variance with each other, as well as with the Established Church. Once more—they are in a state of frequent change; and to in-

vest them with permanent Endowments would be a task as difficult as that of cutting a coat for the moon. In short, Dissenting Sects are ephemeral things, and the rights of individuals, like individuals themselves, perish with time; but Nations and Churches live on. They demand their own by a moral necessity: and when they get their rights, even their old foes are the better for it; for the sword of justice is so tempered from above that wherever it strikes a healing virtue touches the wound. Ireland remained Roman Catholic, and should it regain the church property its own for centuries, no precedent would be established, hostile or relevant even, to the English Church. On the contrary the latter would, in many ways, be strengthened. The dignity of ecclesiastical endowments would be vindicated by connecting them, in both countries alike, with that spiritual utility which is their true sanction. The most formidable enemies of such endowments would be changed into friends. Nor is this all. In England the dissenters claim to constitute a very large part of the population. Count England and Ireland as one, and there exists a formidable majority against their common Establishment; so that, on the principles of Warburton and Paley, Anglicans have cause to fear that its position has already become seriously compromised. Loosen the Irish Establishment from the English Church, and you free the latter from its "body of death." If it falls, with it must fall a hereditary Peerage, and the present laws for the transmission of property.

Let us now see how this question directly affects both countries in their civil relations. There exists a mode by which Ireland can gain religious equality, not by violating, but by realizing the principles of the Constitution, that is by her children ceasing to be disinherited, and her clergy ceasing to be subjected to legal penalties for necessary and innocent acts. When constitutional rights are felt to be a reality, obedience to law is no longer a servile necessity, but becomes elevated first into a moral duty, and eventually into an instinct of self-respect and self-defence. When constitutional rights are but nominal, they are not nugatory merely; they become a mockery, and they may change into a snare. Admit Ireland on equal terms to the Constitution and her lot is cast with the great constitutional parties that divide the field of historical politics. Reject her and you force her into the ranks of those whose face is set, not only against religious endowments, but against whatever is ancient and venerable in the land. This alliance cemented, in England the balance of politics will be destroyed, while on Ireland, a form of political thought and action will be forced from without, which would not have grown up from within. History proves that

the Irish character is not democratical. Make it such, and the tendencies which, among an industrial and Teutonic race may stop short at democracy, will sweep a people at once impassioned and logical into Jacobinism—which includes the fiery element of fanaticism, and speedily burns up into its most militant form. In old times this was not among the trials of Ireland. She never desired a monarchy the boast of which should be that it "reigned but did not rule;" and her misfortune has commonly been, not that her government has been a strong one—it has often been weak—but that it neither represented her honour nor her interests. Ireland must develop her political being on a type congenial to her. The two nations will otherwise be like two ships in a storm, the worse for being tied together.

Parliament has now a great opportunity. It has to shew what an Imperial Parliament *can be*. Scotland has far fewer representatives than Ireland; but she is well governed and contented because what her representatives desire is recognised as their country's voice, and is ratified by the Legislature. We have lately heard on high authority that each of the three kingdoms should be governed in a manner congruous with its special character, so far as such a policy is consistent with the weal of the empire at large. There is philosophy in that statement:—it means that they are to be knitted together for mutual good, not crushed together for mutual harm. The instincts and traditions of a country should be respected, if its good-will be desired, not only where they are demonstrably reasonable, but where they are not unreasonable and noxious. This is representation. There is a direct and there is a virtual representation. If in the case of Ireland the latter be not supplied by the general voice of the legislature her direct representatives must be lost in the mass. There is a third mode of representation which we may call the "vicious representation." It means either a local one which represents but the passions and humours of a country—not its mind and heart—or else a remote one which but feebly and at intervals represents that country at all. The Imperial Parliament has now to prove whether it can, or cannot, represent the mind and heart of Ireland. How is it to be accomplished for the task? By representing Justice and Truth, in which the abiding interests of Ireland are included as the particular in the universal, and by abhorring alike all sloth, cowardice, and craft. If it says "you have rights; but the prejudices of other parts on the empire make it inconvenient to respect them," then it abdicates as a representative body, so far as Ireland is concerned, and sets up as a Parliamentary despotism. Such representation would be tyranny in its most ruthless form—the tyranny of a

majority. It would be foreign domination in disguise, and weighted by the complicity of the vanquished. Eventually it would be spurned by all men of sound morals and just minds, not on the ground that a union was not desirable—far from it—but on the ground that a true union did not exist, and had never been honestly sought.

To consolidate an empire limitless in extent, but flawed at heart, nothing more is necessary than the prudent and timely exercise of Justice and of Truth; but nothing less will suffice. Fidelity to these virtues, by empiricists lightly esteemed, but on the long run the rulers of the world, this—and not sectarian partizanship—is the chief probation of Faith in the sphere of politics. To trifle with these is not venial:—it is *summum nefas* in politics to think that a great wrong can be done, and yet but a small evil be its result. Truth requires that an Exclusive Establishment, speaking in a nation's name, should no longer make a false confession of that nation's Faith. Justice exacts that a nation should no longer be amerced of its Church property because it is guilty of Catholicism. We flatter ourselves that we have long since put away the reproach of penal laws: but penal laws may exist in a privative form; and if they deprive a people of their spiritual inheritance, the *pœna damni* may be worse than the *pœna sensus*. A nation not conscious of guilt will endure penalty in neither form. It is in vain to cry "peace! peace! where there is no peace." Statesmen who exclaim, "let us have done with the past," are ignorant that in maintaining that narrow Ascendency which is its imperious and domineering embodiment, they themselves make the past rule the present and the future, and are themselves its serfs and its slaves. They are ignorant also that the duties of nations and of individuals are not in all respects the same; and that communities, which are Trustees for posterity, although they are bound to remember wrongs no longer when once *wholly* past, have no licence to forget them till then. Those who say—"We cannot justify what exists; but you must content yourselves with inferiority, because your Protestant fellow-countrymen cannot content themselves with equality," do not know the effects which their words produce. Those who say—"We would give you your rights but that the prejudices of certain classes in England and Scotland intimidate us," reproach the Irish with supineness. The arraignment means "where others conspire in defence of wrong you fear to combine in the assertion of right: arise in the *ira leonum vincla recusantum*, then we will sustain your cause." Those who say "We are

bound by engagements," plead their incapacity in vain, for the work brings out the man. The *non possumus* of party leaders is not stronger than the *non volumus* of a people which does not choose that the moral laws that govern the world should be changed, and a wrong be made eternal. Statesmen must not shrink from the work before them because it is arduous. Ireland has long been ruled with a fatal facility; for to alternate half measures of reform with whole measures of coercion was not difficult; but the result has not been peace to rulers, and the problem they have eluded, not solved, has ever fallen back upon them with the irresistible weight of importunate weakness. They have trampled out Fenian follies, and subsidised "Moral Force" agitations; but that spectral problem has confronted them again amid the triumphal procession, and chilled the thanksgiving hymn. Once more they are summoned to the tasks of might, and they must not look for rest till their work is done.

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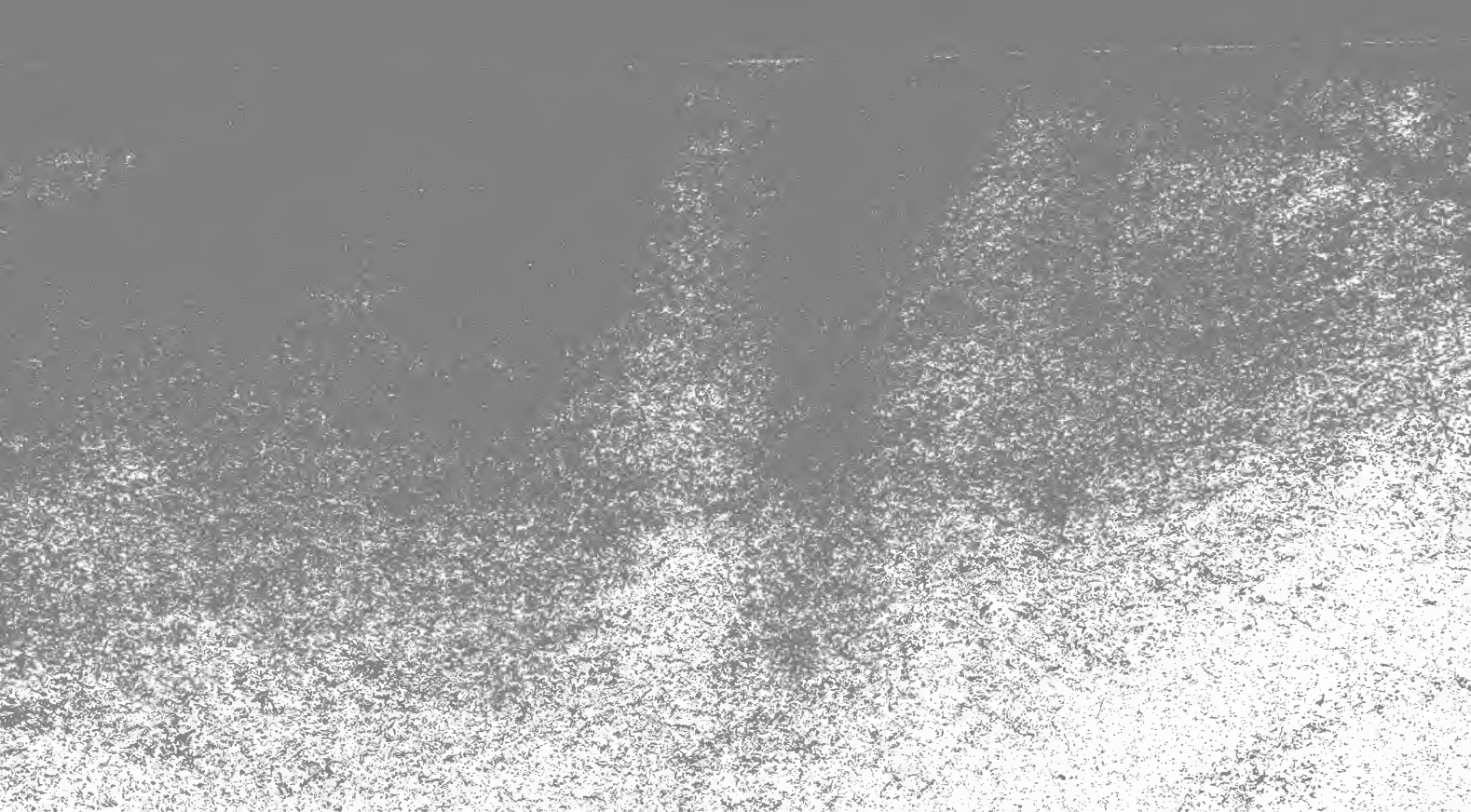

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